

## **US Contribution in Russia-Georgian War of August 2008 Based On the Private Correspondence and Relations between the Presidents**

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**Abstract:** *The purpose of the article is to characterize the private correspondence between Mikheil Saakashvili and George W. Bush before Russia-Georgian war. The main focus will be made on unofficial supportive letters, which are the core documents in determining and implementing not only foreign policy design, but also to build informal, amicable cooperation between these two countries. Given article will analyze the approach of both presidents and discuss whether this kind of relationship has been productive during the most difficult years of Independent Georgia, or it has just remained two presidents' personal attitude. This article will also try to answer the question of whether the relationship between these countries can be reinvented by the diplomatic behavior of presidents. The main research question guiding this analysis is: How do relationships of State's first persons determine the general picture of their countries friendly interdependent. And how the presidential decisions influenced US Foreign Policy design and efficiency towards Russia during the War of August. In short, both Presidents' attitudes, foreign policy architecture, soft and hard power tools as well as the main official statements will be discussed to see what mistakes have been made and if these mistakes were taken into consideration afterwards.*

**Key words:** *Democracy, Diplomacy, Effectiveness, Foreign Policy, Influence, Leadership style, Peace, Power, Public Opinion, Russia, USA, War.*

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### **I. Introduction**

It doesn't happen frequently, when the first persons of the States have so friendly relations, that it defines their countries political, social or economic cooperation. Almost all presidents wish to unlock the secret formula of cooperation with his/her colleague and find stable partnership based on common skills and values. For instance, despite that fact, that Reagan long-term strategy for dealing with the Soviet Union was simple: we win, they lose, most of the scholars are noting that personal relations of Ronald Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachev made Soviet Union Collapse much easier and possible.

Even so, Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher certainly showed that a strong friendship between leaders can be translated into effective cooperation. The extraordinary friendship between the two reinvigorated the flagging Anglo-American "special relationship" with far-reaching consequences. As far as Reagan was concerned their strong tie was evidence of divine intervention, according to a letter he wrote to Thatcher in 1994, days after she delivered a speech in Washington at a formal 83rd birthday tribute for the retired U.S. president. (Schweitzer, 2006)

"Throughout my life, I've always believed that life's path is determined by a Force more powerful than fate. I feel the Lord has brought us together for a profound purpose, and that I have been richly blessed for having known you," he wrote. (Dettmer, 2003)

US and Georgian presidents George W. Bush and Mikheil saakashvili shared not only the presidential formal attitude with each other, but it seemed, that they should have been good friends in the future prospects based on the same ideology and charisma. It was impossible to pinpoint exactly what effect Saakashvili's approach has had on the international arena, but personal relationships often prove useful during negotiations.

### **II. US President Georg W. Bush Visits Georgia**

It's very interesting how far does the personal friendship between leaders go when it comes to international relations, is it a crucial element in negotiations and shaping agreements? Bush's personality-driven, foreign-policy approach has proved successful in many ways, according to diplomats, but there are limitations to it and the danger that sometimes too much is invested in a personal relationship that can't produce desired results.

As you know, ideological aspirations and strategic interests between countries are important preconditions for their cooperation, but it is interesting what happens when, in addition to the common political goals of the countries, the similarities between the first persons in terms of worldview are very large and common.

The 43rd Republican President of the United States, George W. Bush, and the 3rd President of Georgia, Mikheil Saakashvili, had a very friendly relationship with each other, which was evident in a number of official statements from the White House. Washington supported the pro-democracy course elected by the young president. In addition, the relationship between the presidents was marked by the fact that Georgia could become an energy corridor for EU countries. The issue of gas supply to the European countries thanks to the Americans, was the first energy-political topic in this period. Energy resources and their clever, efficient use have become the top priority of all European countries. The United States, on the other hand, has spared no financial resources for the European Community's energy stability and security.

In addition, as I mentioned in the foregoing introduction part, there was informal correspondence between the Presidents of Georgia and the United States, where heads of the states shared their views, words of informal support, congratulations, or attitudes toward world events.

The best confirmation of the presidents informal and casual relations could be the US President's visit to Georgia.

During his two-day stay in Tbilisi on May 9-10, the US president praised the achievements of Georgia's 2003 Rose Revolution, and urged Georgians to persevere amid unavoidable difficulties during the reform process.

While visiting the country, he got acquainted with the functioning of democratic institutions and noted the great progress of the government on the path of state building.

The first letter, which is quite direct and honest in content, was received by the Presidential Palace in Tbilisi a few minutes after Bush's return to the United States, and reflects the unforgettable impressions that greatly influenced President Bush and his wife during their open speech in Freedom Square. The letter said: "Dear Mikheil and Sandra, Laura and I thank you for such a warm and friendly hospitality. We really enjoyed the traditional dish and national dance, as well as meeting the Georgian people at Freedom Square. Congratulations and good luck to the government of Georgia".

**The original copy of the 1<sup>st</sup> letter please see below<sup>1</sup>:**



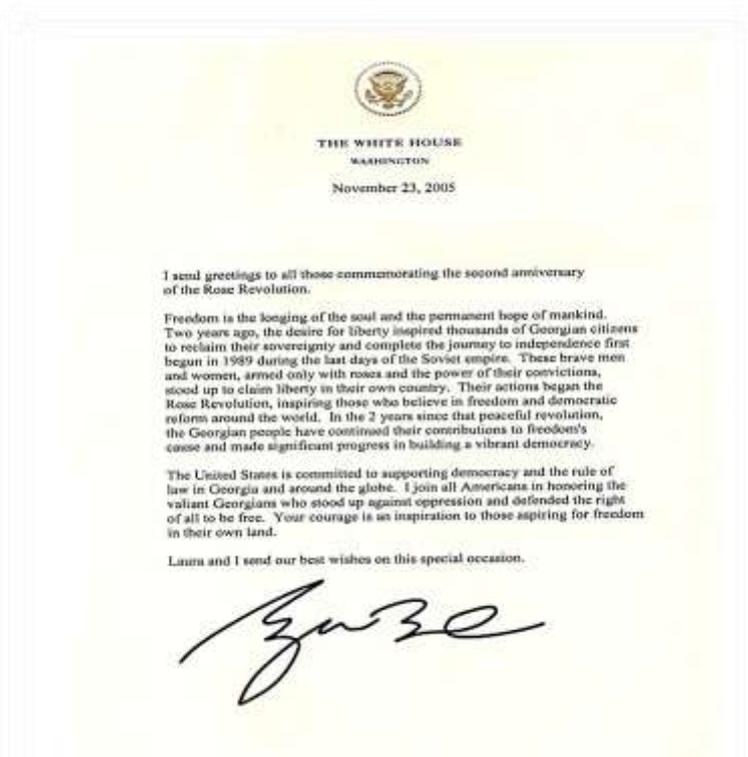
No less noteworthy is the 2<sup>nd</sup> letter received from President Bush on November 23, 2005, in which he congratulated the Georgian people on the second anniversary of the Rose Revolution and praised the greatest achievement of the Georgian nation - the pursuit of freedom and democracy. It should be noted, that such diplomatic

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<sup>1</sup> The original copy of the letter is preserved in the archives of the Saakashvili Foundation Presidential Library.

informal attitude was a huge diplomatic encouragement to Georgia to maintain aspiration for democratic principles in the region.

**The original copy of the 2<sup>nd</sup> letter please see below<sup>2</sup>:**



The letter also says the following:

“Two years ago, the thirst for freedom united thousands of Georgian citizens to fight for the freedom and independence they fought for in 1989. These are the brave women and men who rose with the rose and the faith to defend freedom. The United States strongly supports democracy and the rule of law in Georgia and around the world. Your courage is an inspiration to other nations to strive for freedom”.

These type of close cooperation encouraged the current President of Georgia to carry out significant reforms in various sector to make Georgia become the leader country in the region.

### **III. Nato Summit In Bucharest And Us Support To Georgia**

I would also like to highlight the April 2008 NATO Summit in Bucharest, Romania, where, through George W. Bush's personal activism and direct involvement, NATO member states decided that Georgia should become a member of NATO. Although no specific time or date had been defined, it was still a sign of diplomatic success for the country, and within it the country received more expanded opportunities for cooperation with NATO.

During NATO Summit in Bucharest on 3 April 2008, George W. Bush met the President of Georgia Mikheil Saakashvili and expressed the US Support to Georgia's affiliation with Euro-Atlantic organizations: „US will continue to support Georgia's territorial integrity and sovereignty within its internationally recognized borders and call on Russia to stop violence in Abkhazia and South Ossetia “.

A contentious discussion at Bucharest occurred over whether to admit Georgia and Ukraine to the MAP. U.S. State Department officials have contended that only Germany opposed the MAP for the two governments because Berlin was concerned about a negative reaction in Moscow to putting two neighboring countries on the road to membership. However, interviews of representatives of allied governments indicate a more complicated discussion, and broader opposition. (Gallis, 2008)

NATO makes decisions on the basis of consensus, and a vote is sometimes not taken on an issue that cannot

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<sup>2</sup> The original copy of the letter is preserved in the archives of the Saakashvili Foundation Presidential Library.

be fully resolved. That was the case in this instance. According to CRS interviews, in addition to Germany, representatives of France and at least two other governments indicated that they wish the MAP process to go more slowly; In short, at Bucharest NATO decided not to offer a Membership Action Plan (MAP) to Georgia and Ukraine. The MAP is viewed as a way station to membership. Russia's strong objection to the two countries' eventual membership, as well as internal separatist conflicts in Georgia and public opposition to allied membership in Ukraine were among factors leading to the two governments' failure to enter the MAP. Energy security for candidate states in a future round of enlargement may also prove to be an important issue. The Bush Administration supported the MAP for Georgia and Ukraine, but a number of allies opposed the idea. Both the Senate and House passed resolutions in the second session of the 110th Congress urging NATO to enter into a MAP with Georgia and Ukraine (Senate Resolution 439 & House Resolution 997, 2014).

The final result of the Bucharest Summit was that, NATO opposed Georgia's and Ukraine's entry into the MAP. Several other governments also opposed the MAP for Georgia and Ukraine but would not have blocked consensus had it been within reach, which it was not. While some governments indicated a desire not to antagonize Russia, they said that larger issues were also considered. A majority of Ukraine's population opposes NATO membership; some allies believe that Kiev must persuade its population of the value of membership before the MAP process can begin. Some allies also believe that Georgia must first stage its parliamentary elections in May and achieve acceptable international standards, and that it must make progress on resolving its two "frozen" conflicts within its territory. Some allies also raised another subject, not directly related to the two countries' qualifications. These allies believe that progress must be made to ensure greater energy security in countries vulnerable to a Russian cut-off of their energy resources (Gallis, 2008).

The allies with the active support of the United States agreed in the communiqué upon the unusual formulation, "We agreed today that these countries [Georgia and Ukraine] will become members of NATO." The allies apparently wished to signal their confidence in the ability of the two countries' governments to make the necessary reforms to qualify for membership. The statement was also an obvious message to Moscow that it may not determine which governments enter NATO. The allies did not provide a time frame for eventual membership.

After the Bucharest Summit, official Tbilisi again received a letter from the White House from President Bush stating that he was pleased to see President Saakashvili at the NATO Summit and that talking to him was a productive and progressive step towards leadership in the region and their friendship.

**The original copy of the 3<sup>rd</sup> letter please see below:<sup>3</sup>**



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<sup>3</sup> The original copy of the letter is preserved in the archives of the Saakashvili Foundation Presidential Library.

On the basis of the foregoing letters, I ones again outline the mean of the direct and friendly attitude of the presidents, which could not only be a confirmation but also a guarantee of unprecedented support in the science of international politics in the event of a possible crisis.

The need for both strategic institutional closeness and personal ties between the presidents is important. You will probably agree that the deepening of cooperation between states is more effective when these two circumstances (strategic institutional closeness and personal ties) coincide, as historical experience in international relations shows.

At the same time, the United States has implemented enhanced security cooperation programs to enhance Georgia's integration into Euro-Atlantic structures, which has actually increased Georgia's military potential and strengthened its ability to join Euro-Atlantic structures.

In the face of threats to global peace and stability, Georgia and the United States have expanded their defense and security cooperation programs, with the direct involvement of the leaders of the States.

As we may know, in International Relations or Politics such a development of personal relations between the first persons weren't a frequent and prevailing trend and really created the expectation that in case of any potential domestic or foreign inconvenience created in Georgia in the future should not have come at least without reaction to the Republican presidential administration and in fact it did, which will be discussed in more details below.

#### **IV. The Provocative Circumstances Of The “August War”**

##### *4.1 Kosovo Crisis and parallel with Georgia*

Some international and local scholars of conflict studies believe (and not unreasonably) that the 2008 Russia-Georgia "August War" was Russia's response to the West's decision to recognize Kosovo's independence. It is a remarkable to notice the fact that when Russia was criticized for the recognition of the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia and the drafted of 6-point plan at the UN Security Council meeting on August 28, 2008, the response of the Russian representative to the UN Vitaly Churkin was as follows: “UN Security Council members should not violate UN resolution recognizing Kosovo independence”. (Nichol, 2009).

It all started on February 17, 2008, when the autonomous province of Serbia declared independence and a new geopolitical situation was created on the world political map. Official Washington, like European leaders, has recognized Kosovo's independence. The path to self-determination and independence for Kosovo was bloody, but ultimately successful. Official Belgrade was powerless to oppose the process. (Nichol Jim, 2009). The recognition of Kosovo offended official Moscow, which had long believed that if ethnic cleansing were to be recognized by the West in Kosovo, the same should have happened in the case of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. As Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov believed, the recognition of Kosovo was the beginning of the end of Europe (Asmus, 2010).

At the same time, the official Kremlin said that the recognition of Kosovo was completely unacceptable for them. According to them, there were too many “Kosovo” in the region. It's obvious, that Moscow meant the conflicts in Abkhazia and South Ossetia. In case of Kosovo, which by its very nature was indeed an exceptional precedent on the continent of Europe (and this circumstance was frequently emphasized by the US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rise both in public speeches and at meetings with the Russian diplomatic corps), the Russian ideological machine believed that it should not back down. Being the most important guarantor of Serbia's independence, the recognition of Kosovo's independence from its Western counterparts was an incredible blow to him.

Despite the decision of the international community to enable Kosovo continue its political life as an independent state, I think the risks from the leaders of European states on how such a "recognition" could be benefited by the non-representative democracies have not been fully figured out. As a result, the Russian expansionist policy could not be properly assessed and we got what we got.

It also turns out that Georgia's aspirations in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) was strictly unacceptable to Russia, as according to the current Russian authorities, this so-called "free and sovereign decision" of Georgia posed a threat to them. “NATO troops are totally unacceptable near Russia's borders” (Asmus, 2010).

As it seems, the political leaders in Russia were also worried on the US leadership in NATO and its influence. According to Vladimir Putin, installation of anti-missile systems in Czech Republic and Poland have been decided with direct reference to official Washington. (In spite of the fact that the replacement of Republican President Bush's administration by Democrat Obama and his soft power made major changes to that decision). The Georgian side also spoke of a compromise offer to Putin, such as granting broad autonomy to Abkhazia, in which Georgia and Russia would jointly control their mandate, but this initiative was rejected by

the government of Russia. It seemed to be an alternative to Russia, the details of which were familiar to everyone except one side. (Asmus, 2010).

In the light of the above, I think the United States was reasonably afraid that Georgia would have paid the political price for recognizing Kosovo by the Democratic world (and so it happened). The United States administration, together with its European counterparts, sought to reach an agreement between the parties through dialogue. Like leading EU countries, they wanted to avoid a possible conflict in the region.

#### *4.2 Aggravation of Russia-Georgia relations and steps of the United States*

Despite the direct involvement of the international community, July 2008 turned out to be very difficult for Georgia. The kidnapping of people in Georgia's uncontrolled region and the deterioration of the general political background (including widespread of anti-Georgian propaganda) reached dangerous levels. As we learn from the information sources of this period, unlike the conflict regions of Georgia, our country provided full and comprehensive information to European partners about the situation in the conflict zones.

The merit of the far-sighted foreign policy of the United States was that the diplomatic side of the administration determined how far one side of the conflict could have gone (in this case, Russia) and decided to provide US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice to Georgia. On July 10, 2008, Condoleezza Rice visited Georgia. (Independent commission, 2009).

Visits of a similar political nature in the region, and especially in Georgia, have always been encouraging and fruitful for young democracies, but in our situation – timely. In any case, the Georgian political spectrum considered the visit of a high-ranking US official as a proof of rigid political support. The visit of the US Secretary of State, including political messages, had been also a necessary position voiced at the right time, which, in my opinion, should have made the Russian-Georgian establishment think and take more effective foreign policy steps to avoid a possible conflict. It has been revealed, that during the visit, the Secretary of State stressed the irreplaceable importance of resolving the conflict peacefully. (Lincoln & Cooley, 2010).

The fact that the White House was afraid of a possible provocation of Georgia by Russia is confirmed by the memoirs of the former Secretary of State. ” Mr. President, whatever you do, don't let the Russians provoke you. You remember when President Bush said that Moscow would try to get you to do something stupid. And don't engage Russian military forces. No one will come to your aid, and you will lose” (Kucera, 2011).

From the above, it is vivid, that there was a fear and expectation in the political spectrum of the United States that the former President Mikheil Saakashvili could have been provoked at the expense of impulsiveness and rigidity.

Some international analysts and scholars believe that after the visit of Condoleezza Rice, Russia pursued a much tougher foreign policy towards Georgia, which was reflected in the following activities: The disproportionate mobilization of military forces in regions not controlled by Georgia, in particular the violation of Georgian-controlled airspace, has occurred repeatedly, and despite the concerns of official Tbilisi, this trend has continued. Active consultations between the US representatives and the Georgian government in the pre-war period suggest that the United States was psychologically preparing the partner country for the expecting provocations, and official Washington considered Georgia's inaction in response to such provocations as its main trump card.

Accordingly, the President of Georgia, together with the invited members of the Security Council, was working on a document obliging the parties to the conflict to refrain from the use of force. However, the Georgian government intended to take the interests of the Georgian side into account as much as possible. The Russian Federation, as well as the de facto regimes in Abkhazia and Samachablo, soon refused to negotiate in July, indirectly agreeing to pursue a peaceful policy.

As can be seen from the above examples, we have seen the face of apparent destabilization in the region, and it is noteworthy that the United States has rightly assessed this circumstance and made increasing calls to its ally to remain as inert and passive as possible in the expected rigid and unequal confrontation.

### **V. 2008 Russo-Georgian war**

The course of the August war had been a little in its duration, but in terms of scale, urgency and proportionality it does not really fall short of the modern conflicts of the world. Below I will follow the chronology of the war and try to present in detail all the specific nuances that made the course of the war clearer, emotional and relevant.

In April 2008, Russia began cooperating closely with the de facto governments of Abkhazia and Samachablo, that caused the outrage of the Georgian authorities. International community (both American and European partners) tried not to allow further escalation of the conflict between the opposing parties. At the end of the month, the Russian peacekeeping contingent in Georgia's conflict regions continued to grow with hundreds of armed men and military equipment (namely, five battalions of the Russian 58th Army) and shoot down

Georgian drones, prompting the Russians to hear a number of criticisms at international meetings (Georgian News Agency, 2010).

The July of 2008 turned out to be highly militarized as Georgian troops took part in ongoing US-led military trainings near Tbilisi, while Russian troops conducted parallel military trainings along the Georgian border.

The open confrontation in the border villages started in mid-July, on July 8, when four Russian warplanes violated Georgian airspace near South Ossetia. Official Moscow claimed that the reason for the violation of the Georgian airspace was to stop a possible attack from the Georgian side, while the Georgian Foreign Ministry described the act as "open aggression" and as it turns out, this was the case (Cooley, 2013).

Cases of violence have also been increased in Abkhazia. On July 9, a clash between Georgian and Abkhaz forces in Lower Kodori injured several people on both sides, reinforcing the view that the conflict was expected to be deepen rather than ended. On August 1, 2008, intense gunfire erupted on the Eredvi-Kheiti bypass road near the Samachablo border between Georgian Defense Forces and the South Ossetian Armed Forces, killing six and wounding twenty-one. The Georgian side provided the latest information to both American and European partners on the situation. The recordings of the telephone conversations obtained by the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia confirm the information according to which the Russian regular army entered the territory of Georgia on August 3 of the year.

At the same time, the movement of Russian troops to the Tskhinvali region 20 hours before the start of the conflict has been confirmed by US officials. The war has begun (Rice, 2008).

### *5.1 The political decisions and assistance coming of Bush's administration*

At the very beginning, I mentioned, that the United States had repeatedly warned the Georgian authorities that it would not response open Russian aggression with aggression, but it seemed to official Washington that such a scenario would come as a bit surprise. Security Council has been invited chaired by Stephen Hadley, National Security Adviser to President George W. Bush, along with Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and other senior

US officials. As per the memoirs of Condoleezza Rice the plan of assistance to Georgia from Washington had been discussed. According to the same source, Steve Hadley asked if the United States was even ready to rage a war for Georgia. After this question, according to Rice, there was a silence in the room and they started talking about a more useful issue, what could be actually done to help Georgia (Rice, 2008). National Security Adviser Stephen Hadley believed that Washington should have done everything through diplomatic channels to avoid heavy political consequences for Georgia. However, Hadley also knew from historical experience that speaking in diplomatic language with Russia was less effective. As Harry Truman, the 33rd President of the United States, once said: "The Russians understood only an iron fist, Truman said, and he was tired of babying them" (Kacharava, 2013).

According to Hadley, the main message of the United States should have been that Russia would not allow its ally country to be oppressed (Asmus, 2010). The existing situation by this time requested from the United States to make a quick and productive decision. The situation in the South Caucasus region was deteriorating day by day, for example, on August 11 it became clear that not only to return to the pre-conflict situation, but also Russian military units had decided to take down Capital Tbilisi. President Bush, Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, and, as we have repeatedly mentioned, National Security Adviser Stephen Hadley, discussed military assistance to Georgia. Among them, Vice President Dick Cheney had the most radical position in President Bush's administration and was actually thinking of Washington's military assistance to Georgia (Asmus, 2010).

According to WikiLeaks records, the closed-door meeting also focused on Georgian air support and targeted air strikes on Russian units to deter them (WikiLeaks, 2010). President Bush (despite his alliance with the Georgian people and personal friendly relationship with President of Georgia) tried not to make a hard-hearted decision that would have far-reaching consequences in the long term perspective. According to George W. Bush, American military assistance to the Georgian side would be the beginning of a confrontation with Russia. President Bush convened a press conference at the White House. He was accompanied by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and Secretary of Defense Robert Gates. The president of the United States expressed concern and outrage at the actions of the Russian leadership with the following words: "We immediately call on Russia to renounce all military intervention and withdraw its equipment and military units and return it to the pre-conflict area". Bush also announced unprecedented large-scale humanitarian aid to Georgia, which would be delivered by one of its largest naval destroyers, the USS McFaul.

In my opinion, this decision was a strong military-political message for the Georgia's northern neighbor, and if we look at the picture of the conflict from an already completed and concluding position, it really was so. It's logical, that the United States could not go on an open military confrontation against Russia. Therefore, in addition to the above, the Bush Cabinet made a decision to send US warplanes to Georgia on a

humanitarian mission. Including:

1. US special forces quickly drove a Georgian military unit from Iraq to Georgia (This is when 85% of the Georgian sky was controlled by Russian war-plane bombers);
2. Russian war-plane bombers failed to attack Tbilisi airport while bombing Georgia's strategic targets, as an American Hercules type Boeing was at the airport and did not leave despite numerous warnings;
3. On August 14, American Hercules type war-plane bombers coming from Jordan crossed the Georgian border. The head of their air force officially stated that any Russian air activity directed against them in the Georgian skies would be perceived as an attack on the United States, to which an appropriate response would be followed;
4. The USS McFaul, already mentioned above, entered the Black Sea in City Batumi on August 24. McFaul was able to establish full air control of Tbilisi-Moscow-Volgograd with its radar systems, and this political move caused great dissatisfaction in the Kremlin (Myers, 2008).

This is part of the diplomatic steps taken by the George W. Bush administration during Georgia's most critical period. Calling for a peaceful solution to the problem and avoiding a direct conflict between NATO and Russia in the international arena was dominated mainly by the US. As it turns out from behind the scenes, it was at the instruction and request of the United States that the President of the European Union, French President Nicolas Sarkozy, mediated with the parties to the conflict, which resulted on August 12, and the parties reached a ceasefire agreement. (Vinocur, 2010).

This was a way for the United States to show its support for Tbilisi. The main purpose of the foregoing political move from the United States was that Russian leadership changed his mind regarding punishing Georgia.

In addition to the above, it should be noted that official Washington considered not only military assistance to Georgia, but also, first of all, the solution of the conflict through diplomacy and the establishment of peace in the region.

At the beginning of the article, we talked about the friendly personal relations between the leaders of the countries and then we discussed how effective these relations are in resolving the crisis. On the example of George W. Bush and Mikheil Saakashvili, we see how the US President is unanimous in diplomatically supporting the president of a small democracy in the region and saving this state gains with him. In addition to the correspondence discussed above, during the "August War" several telephone conversations had been arranged between the first persons of the United States and Georgia, and in the last dialogue their informal relationship is once again visible with the following text: "George, today the issue of my country as an independent democratic state is under attack. Putin wants to destroy everything that your father had built here for so far", And Bush replies that he is doing everything he can to resolve the conflict in the shortest possible time (Civil Georgia, 2013).

It was the United States that convened the UN Security Council, where they wanted to pass a peace resolution that would force Russia to withdraw its military troops, but Russia and China vetoed several versions of the peace resolution and blocked the issue at the UN, after which the United States, France and the United Kingdom decided to continue discussing the peace resolution within the EU structures and make an effective decision. (As you are aware, Russia, like the United Nations, is not a permanent member of the European Union and therefore would not have the right to use its veto to prevent the conflict from being resolved as soon as possible).

## **VI. Discussion**

At the beginning of the article, I talked about the importance of both institutional closeness and personal ties between the two countries' leaders. Enhancing cooperation among countries is mainly more effective when these two circumstances coincide, as experience in international relations shows. I believe that the special diligence of the Bush administration to save Georgia's democracy and state institutions, largely was caused due to the common values and strategic interests of Georgia and the United States. In his book, called "Decision Points", Bush himself describes President Saakashvili as a charismatic leader. As he notes in his book, the United States has been a strong supporter of Georgia and Ukraine on their path to membership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). In Europe, however, opinions were divided on the issue. The leaders of Germany and France, Angela Merkel and Nicolas Sarkozy, were skeptical of granting a map to the former Soviet republics. At the same time, according to George W. Bush, Sarkozy and Merkel stressed the strained relations between the governments of Ukraine and Georgia with official Moscow. Based on the latter, they were concerned about the potential involvement of the North Atlantic Alliance in the war against Russia. Expected threats from the Russian Federation have hampered the expansion of the North Atlantic Alliance along Russia's borders. In spite of that, according to George W. Bush, they agreed to reach a common compromise so

as not to hinder the democratic progress of Georgia and Ukraine. According to the compromise, the two countries would not receive a Map in Bucharest, although the North Atlantic Alliance has publicly stated that Georgia and Ukraine will definitely become members of the alliance in the future.

To President Bush, the August war came as no surprise, as he discusses in his book. He writes, that the Autonomous Republic of Abkhazia and the region of South Ossetia had close relations with Russia and the influence of the Russian government in these regions was quite strong. Consequently, while President Bush viewed Putin as a power-loving leader who wanted to restore the Soviet Union to its former glory, it made sense to him that the existence of a small, pro-NATO democracy in the region was at least a threatening circumstance (Bush, 2010).

According to Bush, he heard about the Russian intervention in Georgia during the Olympic Games in Beijing and immediately decided to share his concerns about the situation with the President of Russia Dmitry Medvedev. After having a conversation with him on the phone, he was convinced, that the situation had been much more difficult than he had suggested. According to him Russia was busy not withdrawing its intentions and plans, but to implementing the intervention plan.

President Bush emphasizes, that the conflict finally came to a diplomatic end a few weeks later, and that the role of the United States administration in the peace process was of utmost importance. Despite the tough foreign decisions made during the presidency of George W. Bush, we see in some conflicts that he did not abandon a rather measured and balanced foreign strategy, which was reflected in the diplomatic solution of the "August war". I think, that the foregoing tactical moves have finally brought a positive dynamic to the relations, and despite the fact that Russia has benefited a lot from the warfare, it has become possible to avoid a global conflict among the States. As for the advantage of the Georgian side, in my opinion, it is still a dialogue and the prospect of a peaceful solution of the conflict.

## **VII. CONCLUSION**

The "August War" was one of the most critical periods in the history of independent Georgia. The "5-Day War", as many scholars refer to it, has had the worst consequences for Georgia.

After signing the ceasefire agreement, Russia withdrew most of its troops from Samegrelo and Shida Kartli regions. Buffer zones were established along the borders of Abkhazia and South Ossetia and left check posts in the following regions - Poti, Senaki and Perevi. On August 26, Russia recognized the independence of South Ossetia and Abkhazia. As of September 25, 2008 according to the Ministry of Defense of Georgia, 168 servicemen of the Armed Forces; 16 police officers and 188 civilians have been dead.

As we are aware, any country coming from the catastrophic situation needs the active political and economic assistance of its allies and international organizations. It is clear from our paper that the United States was the leader in this regard.

Some American analysts believe, that by intervening in Georgia, Russia has pushed the "diplomatic slap" to the West's favorite country in the region and at the same time to the US-trained Georgian army.

It should be also noted, that very naive expectations have arisen among the leadership of Georgian Government, that Georgian contingents trained by the US and participating in various international missions would have played an important role in repelling Russian aggression. Facts speak for themselves, the 2008 war ended with the worst consequences for Georgia.

Under the leadership of the United States, particularly the Bush administration, \$ 4.5 billion in financial resources were mobilized (the United Nations, the World Bank, the Millennium Challenge Corporation, congressionally approved grants, and low-cost loans) to help heal post-war wounds.

As a part of the conclusion, we can say, that the 2008 war was part of the ongoing geopolitical and geostrategic struggle in the modern world. During this crisis, the United States, as a strategic ally, spared no effort in the most difficult political situation for Georgia to cease fire immediately and maintain the country's territorial integrity as well as its independence. The involvement of the European Union is also noteworthy, but under the leadership of the United States, the same European Union was able to include the corrections requested by Georgia in the 6-point plan of the ceasefire agreement.

As the author of the study, I am not trying to talk about the special contribution of any ally or international organization, but the assistance of the United States before and after the war was decisive and exemplary in the light of all the above-mentioned diplomatic steps that we saw in the paper. We can conclude that the vision and steps of the Bush administration were outcome-oriented and effective in the long term perspective and not based on populist, ineffective tactics. The United States stood next to the Georgia when the country did not share the terms of the peace agreement and requested its corrections.

Georgia hadn't been in such a position that the word "request" would have been adequate for it in the given reality but with the assistance and active involvement of Bush's administration, the conditions of the agreement have been changed. Of course, the special diligence of the United States in this regard was caused by other factors. In particular, Georgia had been a role model for a country with semi-democratic or transitional democracies in Europe, the South Caucasus region, and on many other locations. A dedicated defender of the values on which the idea of equality, justice and freedom stood. The possible indifference shown by the states in

this conflict would have been perceived as a great disappointment to other young democracies. Playing the role of a leader in Georgia would first of all strengthen his (The United States) prestige and image in the international community and not only (Khelashvili & Macfarlane, 2010).

As we have seen, the granting of MAP to Georgia at the 2008 Bucharest Summit has been seen as an important step towards strengthening the European security, which, as time has shown, turned out to be a completely correct view. At that time, Europe did not resist Russia's actions in Georgia because of the economic interests that connected Europe with Russia. This, in the end, led to Russia completing its own "mission" - it declared and unilaterally recognized as the so-called Independence of "South Ossetia" and Abkhazia. Based on the foregoing, we can conclude that Georgia had been lucky even in the conditions of the Republican administration and the friendly president and his close personal relations with Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili. otherwise it would have been difficult to imagine what would have happened in the case of the same Democrat Barack Obama administration, who once becoming the President of the United States, changed his political strategy to Russia and publicly "Reset policy" towards it.

Finally, the direct merit of the Republican Platform is the signing of the Charter on Strategic Partnership with Georgia, which outlined the directions of future cooperation after the war and is still successful in these areas in terms of increasing Georgia's defense and security readiness and strengthening democratic institutions.

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