

Pivot States and Great Powers - the U.S. Foreign Policy Strategy towards Georgia as a “Pivot State“

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Abstract

Great powers are believed to play a crucial role in global politics. Their keen interests in politics, military capabilities and economic strength mean that their actions have a great influence on the international security environment. The powers maintain dominant positions in alliances and in waging wars, and prove their diplomatic and political weight in international affairs. This difference in power distribution and reputation leads to so called “a set of rights and rules“, governing interactions among states. Pivot states generally possess military, economic or ideational strategic assets and are coveted by great powers. They are caught in the middle of overlapping spheres of influence of multiple great powers as measured by associations that consist of ties that bind military and economic agreements as well as cultural affinities.

Keywords: Brinkmanship, cooperation, deployment, global politics, great actors, initiative, pivot states

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Introduction

Why are the Pivot States so Attractive for the Great Actors?

There are four great powers in our globalized world: the United States (US), Russia, China and the European Union. They are considered to be the most powerful leaders as they possess of superior military and economic capabilities. In the list of ten leading countries, (the US, Russia, China, France, Britain, India, Germany, Italy, Japan and Saudi Arabia) that are chosen largely due to military amount, that is perfectly matched with the GDD of these countries but Saudi Arabia which is outrun by Brazil). Each of them has its particular place on the UNSC and is identified as the main military and economic leader. The EU weighs their economic, political and diplomatic power and estimates the most outstanding among them (Sweilis, 2014). Pivot are the states that have valuable political, economic, military cost for Great Actors. They are located in the center of the places that equally attract grate power's interest. They connect strategic plans and goals of the great powers (Sweilis, 2014).

US – Georgian Bilateral Interest

The clearer indication on considering from the US government Georgia as a pivot state status holder is to be considered as a case-study provision bilateral relation between the nations occurring in recent times. The Georgian political reality has been enriched by new initiative echoed by the ex-Chairman of the Parliament David Usupashvili in 2016 on deployment of the American military bases in Georgia that really made great sound. Georgia-American relations since 2002 has been already transformed into very strategic partnership

level and two latest USA Administration – George Bush's Junior and Barack Obama's, which defined Georgia as "pivotal state", expressed specific interests toward the country (including military interests).

Having considered that the Georgian Armed Forces was trained and equipped in accordance to the American military standards and the Georgian Army became a pure "macro-American" style military institutions due to the realization of the "Train and Equip Special Program" Georgia was enlisted to those country list, mostly Latin American ones (as for, Salvador, Honduras, Columbia, Chile, etc.) whose Armed Forces construction modality had been grounded on the U.S. Armed Forces case, including strategic command structures. The Georgian "American" Army was sought to be somehow additional and surplus to the big Army detachment. It was not rarely declared by then President of the Russian Federation Dmitry Medvedev: "In August of 2008 we did not defeated Georgian Armed Forces but defeated the American Armed Forces". This is really background that due to the special funds in \$64 million allocated by the Congress in 2001 the Georgian Armed Forces trained and equipped by the Americans became a "successful case" for the Post-Soviet Space and first successful mission was achieved in Pankisi Gorge in 2003 when Islamic Jihadist forces were pulled out of the Georgian territory. Later peacekeeping operations in Iraq and in Afghanistan were other cases of achieved missions at global level (Watch, 2016).

Key Questions which Highlight U.S.-Georgian Strategic Partnership Policy

Having considered David Usupashvili's statement some concrete questions have been forwarded like: what are legal and political basics for deployment of the USA bases in Georgia? Why the initiative was declared by the pro-American political national

movement at this time? What factors have determined for declaration of the statement?

In this case there are several such interesting basic documents, which provided solid ground for pushing ahead the initiative. Among these documents it could be outlined four ones:

Unites States-Georgia Charter on Strategic Partnership – adopted in January 2009

The U.S. National Security Strategy – adopted in February of 2015

NATO SOFA Agreement adopted by the Georgian Parliament in 2001

H.Res.660 - Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives to support the territorial integrity of Georgia adopted in September of 2016.

These documents directly or indirectly are expressing concrete features for political and legal aspects of American military bases deployment in Georgia. For example, the USA-Georgia Charter in Section II "Defense and Security Cooperation" stipulates the following: "*Building on the existing cooperation among their respective agencies of defense and armed forces, the United States supports the efforts of Georgia to provide for its legitimate security and defense needs, including development of appropriate and NATO-interoperable military forces*". This last part of the statement of the Charter provides somehow legal aspects for deployment of the American military forces on territories of Georgia. As for the Resolution#600 by the Congress directly matched out: "*urges the United States Administration to*

place emphasis on enhancing Georgia's security through joint military trainings and providing self-defensive capabilities in order to enhance Georgia's independent statehood and national sovereignty" (Congress Resolution#600, 2017). Additionally, the next phrase of the Resolution identifies importance of the whole region in aegis of the Caucasus region as a vital geopolitical space for the USA national interests perspectives, like: "*affirms that a free, united, democratic, and sovereign Georgia is in the long-term interest of the United States as it*

promotes peace and stability in the region".(ibid).

Regarding the Caucasus region importance for the American national interests, it has underlined in the most important and decisive document of the USA – National Security Strategy. The document has directly mentioned that – "*We will steadfastly support the aspirations of countries in the Balkans and Eastern Europe toward European and Euro-Atlantic integration, continue to transform our relationship with Turkey, and enhance ties with countries in the Caucasus while encouraging resolution of regional conflict*" (National Security Strategy, 2017). And herewith is underlined that USA can even foster in relations with strategic partner from the Post-Soviet space even with military means. It is indicated in the following passage: "*We are reassuring our allies by backing our security commitments and increasing responsiveness through training and exercises, as well as a dynamic presence in Central and Eastern Europe to deter further Russian aggression. This will include working with Europe to improve its energy security in both the short and long term. We will support partners such as Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine so they can better work alongside the United States and NATO, as well as provide for their own defense*" (Ibid). These concrete arguments are vivid-expressions of how strategically considered Georgia's place is in

geopolitical goals of the USA foreign-policy decision-making process. This is interesting prerequisite preclusions for promotion of these goals with and by any means and is creating solid ground for various debates and discussions on the issues. Even the Georgian Constitution unlike to Moldova's one does not cast the questions whether is a possibility of deployment of any foreign states' Armed Forces in Georgia and unclearness of the issue at the utmost legal binding document spurs many speculations whether it is a correct declared position or not.

Here are some indications regarding the second question – why the initiative is promoting at

this time and what factors determined the trend. The initiative has been declared in time when in Georgia there was undergone Parliamentary election campaign and some pro-American oriented political parties, on name of the Republican Party of Georgia was keen to receive support from the national electorate and speculate on the issue is a way of attracting more pro-Western oriented electorate as well as attracted attention from the USA policy-makers toward the Georgian politics. In addition, in time of ongoing "New Cold War" between the USA and Russia determines fierce competition of both parties to hint each other in their sphere of influence and increase its prestige with military means. Namely, the deployment of the American bases counter-weight the Russian military bases in occupied territories of Georgia in Abkhazia and South Ossetia is an interesting case for reaching balance of power at the regional level. Intrastate differences often divide pivot states. Such distinctions can be religious, ethnic, linguistic or cultural in nature, and more often than not they are a combination of all of the above. And it is precisely when these pivot states are caught in the middle, when opposing great powers push and pull in opposite directions, that they are torn apart

(Sheng, 2003). One of the best examples of that situation is Ukraine that suffers from violation of divisive forces. The only two countries that have made a pivot from one great power towards another are Georgia (from Russia towards 'the West', i.e. the US and the EU) and Iraq, which in recent years completed a pivot from Russia towards the US. There are some cases when pivot countries are in the center of great power conflicts when pivot states become victims to great powers encroaching on each other's spheres of influence. When Great powers are competing over each it sometimes turns into what is commonly called brinkmanship (act of deliberately taking risks) "But brinkmanship can be exercised by pivot states, too. Georgia in the run up to the 2008 war with Russia is a case in point. Georgia had been keen on bolstering ties with the West and was

betting on Western assistance in its conflict with Russia, while the latter did not materialize in the end"(Sheng, 2003).

Conclusion

In 2008 Georgia fought a brief war with Russia which, despite close cooperation between Georgian and Western militaries, did not draw other great powers into the conflict. Earlier that same year, NATO had promised that Georgia would become a member of the alliance once it would meet the accession criteria. Following the war, cooperation with Russia has all but evaporated. Meanwhile, Russia continues to deploy forces in the Georgian breakaway territories South Ossetia and Abkhazia. Georgia is principally considered to be important for ideational reasons, and is a key example of how pivot states in overlapping spheres of influence can strain great power relations.

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