

## **D E C L A R A T I O N**

### **of the Republican and Conservative Parties United under the Georgian Parliamentary Faction “Democratic Front”**

#### **on the Principles of Georgia’s Integration in NATO and Normalization of Russo-Georgian Relations**

1. Georgia has stepped into the 21<sup>st</sup> century with two interrelated vital statehood problems: (1) de-facto loss of sovereignty on the part of its own territory; and (2) powerful neighboring country continues interfering in its internal affairs and pressuring through the use of methods inherited from the imperial past. Accordingly, the process of restoring Georgia’s statehood has not completed yet, thus hampering the valuable political formation of a public life.

2. Resolution of these issues cannot be viewed as Georgia’s internal problem only. It is highly unexpected that in the near future the Russian Federation shifts towards modern democratic standards of relations with the neighbors, thus placing the bilateral relations in a mutually beneficial channel. Being in the captivity of hegemonic ambitions, Russian Federation is unable to formulate and protect its own interests in the South Caucasus without causing harm to the statehood of Georgia and its national security.

3. Hence, Georgia’s affiliation in such an international system, the joint forces of which the Russian Federation shall take into consideration, remains as a real means for normalizing relations between Georgia and the Russian Federation. Being a part of this system is crucial for Georgia not for gaining advantageous power with respect to Russia, but for neutralizing the actions directed against Georgian statehood. Consequently, Georgia’s affiliation in NATO is a precondition for forming the equal and neighborly interstate relations with the Russian Federation.

4. Affiliation in NATO is not a matter of days or months. Even in the event of the most advantageous development of the scenario, reaching this goal shall require several years. In the meantime, Georgia should work under the intensive dialogue regime not only with NATO, but the Russian Federation, other neighbors and partners, and de-facto authorities and general public of separatist regions in order to make its strategic choice clear to the maximum and acceptable to the possible extents. Georgia should convince all that its affiliation in NATO is not directed against anyone, does not create danger for anyone, but rather aims to provide security to the country and its entire population. At the same time, this shall contribute to achieving stability and security in the geopolitically important region of the South Caucasus. By affiliating in NATO, Georgia should become a more trustworthy, predictable, and perspective partner for its direct neighbors in the South Caucasus region.

5. On the way to NATO Georgia should also develop maximum cooperation and integration with the Black Sea basin countries in the GUAM and other regional organizational formats. Steady approach to the EU membership criteria and the establishment and perception of European liberal and democratic standards in the political, economic, and social spheres are the necessary attributes for full-scale and equal membership of the Euro-Atlantic system of security.

6. A primary goal of Georgia's affiliation in NATO is to ensure country's security and unity and to protect its territorial integrity within the internationally recognized borders. Therefore, the guarantee of country's territorial integrity is a major precondition for becoming a member of NATO. This should be absolutely clear as for NATO and its member States, as well as for the neighboring countries. Accordingly, it is totally unacceptable to speculate about Georgia's affiliation in NATO so that only a part of its territory and population is protected and the problems related to Abkhazia and the former South Ossetian Autonomous District, as well as the IDP population remain unsolved. At the same time, citizens living in Abkhazia and the former South Ossetian Autonomous District should receive clear guarantees that Georgia does not intend to deal with them by means of forceful methods and abusing the NATO factor.

7. By means of affiliating in NATO, Georgia should restore the de-facto sovereignty lost on the part of its territory and not entrust the part of sovereignty seized by the Russian Federation to other entity/player. Georgia should be ready for full contribution to the realization of NATO member countries' common interests without violating its own strategic interests. Becoming a member of NATO should not be apprehended as alms given by the NATO member States to Georgia. Placing Georgia in the NATO sphere is a mutually beneficial phenomenon and it should be achieved through mutually acceptable ways and means.

8. Georgia's aspiration to NATO is accompanied by Russia's attempts to impede this process. Nevertheless, it is equally unacceptable to make recessions that further us from the goal and artificially aggravate relations with the Russian Federation, including acting and making statements that demean the dignity of its leaders or fellow citizens.

9. Integration in NATO makes Georgia a stronger state; and a stronger state should be more responsible, dignified, solid, and trustworthy. Parallel to leaving CIS and integrating in NATO, Georgia should offer the Russian Federation to accept mutually beneficial initiatives and show to the Russian Federation that it does not intend to participate in Russia's exclusion from the region, but intends to achieve its own security and non-intervention of borders, which would automatically ensure safety for Russia's southern borders as well.

10. Georgia should be rather solid in relations with the Western partners also. Their interest in Georgia's integration into the Euro-Atlantic area is not altruistic or fed only on democratic ideals; they also pursue their interests, in achieving which Georgia also plays a certain role. If the country is unable to act as a trustworthy and stable partner that fulfills all obligations undertaken, then the Western states shall seek alternative ways to realize their own interests. Infantilism, non-qualification, and inconsistency of the country's President and his team could create such obstacles on the way to country's integration into NATO. NATO membership is only one of the factors promoting economic upheaval, human rights, and the development of democracy in the country. Further, the development of democratic institutes and free entrepreneurship should precede integration in NATO. Unfortunately Saakashvili's government is still unable to realize this fact. It is obvious that if Georgia loses the unique chance and once again stays alone with Russia and other influential states of the region at this historical stage, then it will be doomed for eternal battle for survival and not the respectful labor for prosperity.

11. Finally, it should be stressed that Georgia's integration in NATO and the normalization of relations with the Russian Federation is a long-term strategic geopolitical task and in this context it is absolutely crucial to ensure the continuity of a relevant political course. Based on the mentioned, all political parties agreeing with this postulate (regardless whether they represent government or the opposition) should ensure the solution of this task through the joint efforts.

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