



Today Defence

Ministers reaffirm support for Georgia's Euro-Atlantic aspirations



The NATO-Georgia Commission met at the level of Defense Ministers for a discussion about the current security situation in the country and about NATO-Georgia cooperation on June 11.

Allied Defense Ministers gathered in NATO's HQ, Brussels and discussed key aspects of NATO-Georgia cooperation, Georgia's participation in ISAF, implementation of Annual National Program and current defense reforms.

The NATO secretary general delivered opening remarks at the NGC meeting. Anders Fogh Rasmussen extended gratitude towards Georgia for its contribution to NATO-led ISAF operation.

"Today will also look at how we can further support Georgia's reform efforts. NATO's decision to open the Door to Georgia still stands – but a lot of reform still needs to be done. The Alliance will continue to support and guide those reforms, in particular democratic civilian oversight of defence and security force," the secretary general said.

After the opening remarks Anders Fogh Rasmussen gave floor to the Georgian Defense

Minister Bacho Akhalaia.

"I am delighted to use this opportunity and highlight the significance of NATO-Georgian Commission which represents an important mechanism to deeper political dialogue and cooperation between the alliance and Georgia." Defence Minister underlined the fact, that the work of the NATO-Georgia Commission and successful implementation of the Annual National Program 2010 will accelerate Georgia's integration into the Alliance. "It's critical to underscore that despite of the security challenges we are rigorously moving forward. We have achieved substantial progress in our defense reforms," Akhalaia said.

He also focused on Georgia's participation in ISAF operations: "I would like to underline that Georgia not only receives but also provides significant support to the alliance for its top priority mission in Afghanistan by being one of the largest per contributor to ISAF." He expressed hope that the future cooperation based on understanding of mutual interests and needs contribute to our common goals for peace, security and stability in the Euro-

Atlantic space.

After the opening remarks of the secretary general and the Defense minister, the meeting continued behind the closed doors. Akhalaia provided allied defense ministers with updated information on crucial developments, future plans and existing challenges in the defence sector of Georgia.

By the end of the NGC meeting the Georgian Defence Minister reaffirmed that Georgia's Euro-Atlantic integration course is irreversible.

"We are ready for successful implementation of the reform process and are committed to use intensively all the existing partnership mechanisms to accelerate Georgia's integration into NATO."

NATO ministers of defense reaffirmed the Alliance's continued support for Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity and its aspirations for NATO membership. They encouraged Georgia to pursue necessary reforms and reiterated the Alliance's readiness to continue supporting the country in this regard.

Allied ministers recognized Georgia's significant contribution to ISAF that was also stipulated in the final declaration adopted following the Defence Ministerial.

After the NATO-Georgia Commission, Defence Minister attended the Meeting of NATO Defence Ministers with non-NATO ISAF Contributing nations.

In the framework of the NATO Defence Ministerial Georgian Defence Minister held meetings with his foreign counterparts where the sides discussed bilateral cooperation issues in defence sphere.



Georgian Delegation in Afghanistan

In the middle of June a Georgian delegation paid a visit to Afghanistan to see the Georgian militaries performing their peacekeeping duties there. Georgian Defense Minister Bacho Akhalaia headed the delegation. Other members included Vice Prime Minister Giorgi Baramidze, permanent representative to NATO Grigol Mgaloblishvili and head of Parliamentary Committee on Defense and Security Givi Targamadze.

The Georgian delegation was received in Kabul by the U.S. commander of the international coalition forces. The sides discussed the importance of Georgia's participation in the ISAF mission. The coalition command expressed gratitude to the Georgian delegation for its rigorous contribution to the NATO-led international peace support operations. The general positively evaluated the preparedness of the

Georgian peace contingent and added that the French and German commanders were satisfied with their professionalism.

"The goal of our visit was to see in what conditions our units deployed to Afghanistan are performing their peacekeeping mission. At present our contingent is taking over the major responsibilities of the operation. As we were told by the American Generals, they are very satisfied with the military servicemen of our battalion and the most important of all, our peacekeepers are very pleased for getting experience and for the knowledge they are acquiring here," Akhalaia said.

In Kabul the Staff Company of Land Forces' Third Infantry Brigade - 173 Georgian military servicemen take part in International Security Assistance Forces (ISAF) operation under the French command in Regional Command HQ in Kabul (RC

HQ). They are positioned in one of NATO's military bases in Afghanistan called "Warehouse" along with military servicemen of some other countries. Their main task is to provide 24-hour security and to guard the base territory around its perimeter. All day long Georgian servicemen patrol the nearby settlements and territories around the base. There is a market on the "Warehouse" base territory where the local population works. Georgian militaries, even female soldiers, check inhabitants and their goods for sale. Only after inspection local inhabitants are allowed into the base.

Rotation of the company stationed in Kabul was carried out in May, after six months of service. Their mission was accomplished without any casualties and deserved highest evaluation.

Continued on p.3



INSIDE

- ▶ Interview with NATO's special representative in South Caucasus and Central Asia Robert Simmons
- ▶ Georgian Defense Conference

- ▶ Contract-based Military Service
- ▶ Aliante 2010
- ▶ Workshop for Public Affairs Officers (PAO)

Interview with NATO's special representative in South Caucasus and Central Asia Robert Simmons

On June 18-19 NATO's special representative in South Caucasus and Central Asia Robert Simmons paid a visit to Georgia to attend the Georgian Defense Conference in Batumi. On the sidelines of the conference, "Defence Today" interviewed Mr. Simmons and discussed the issues of reforms in the defense sphere, the Annual National Plan, the Georgian Defense Doctrine, the mission in Afghanistan, the new strategic concept of the Alliance and NATO enlargement.



I would like to start our conversation with the Georgian defence conference held in Batumi, which was attended by representatives of various ministers of NATO member and partner countries, ambassadors and military attaches accredited in Georgia. As we know, the discussion issues were the ongoing reforms at the Ministry of Defense. How do you evaluate this process in the last six months and what are your recommendations about the Georgian reformation process?

The defense reform, and this was raised at the conference, is almost a constant process because every country including allied countries has to update their forces, make changes to reflect current circumstances. Obviously, for Georgia the 2008 war was a critical event for evaluations. I think you have learned good lessons from that and much of the reforms that you are engaged in are based on that process. What is important about this conference and this has been something that is characterizing Georgia from the beginning is that it permits this to be a transparent process. It permits you to talk with active NGOs, allies, ambassadors and officials from Brussels. This is very good.

What can I highlight? I think you have done some very good work in developing your Strategic Defense Review but we will come back to this topic. One of the things is the need for more reform in the personnel structure of the ministry and I think they have done that both on the civilian and military side. There is a more structured process now, particularly on the military side for promotions and clear patterns. Third is education. Developing a good educational system for the military and particularly for the officers is very important.

Finally, there is equipment. You de-

fine the mission, you define the interoperability and you must identify what the equipment shall need. That is a longer term and difficult project because you have to have the assets for it. However, there is something what I think is important that you follow through and identify the equipment purchases based on your strategic defence review, advice and the need for interoperability.

In your speech at the conference, you mentioned that the Caucasus is in NATO's interest. What are you trying to say with that?

Going back to the Istanbul Summit or even before, we emphasized that we see enlargement of the Alliance. With the end of the conflict in the Balkans, the Caucasus and Central Asia were two priority areas for our partnership for peace. In fact, my appointment as the secretary general's special representative shows that. The Caucasus itself is a particular region, which is important in that connection. There are of course conflicts. The war you had in 2008, which of course the Alliance discussed, local relations with Russia for a period and all the rest of it. There is also Nagorno-Karabakh; arrangements between Armenia and Turkey. We would like to see stability and solutions to some of these long-standing problems, which we follow very attentively in the Alliance. That is one of the reason that I am engaged in that and obviously work with individual countries to carry that forward.

Therefore, the peace in the Caucasus is peace for NATO and its members.

Absolutely, that is why I am interested in it but equally if a conflict breaks out again it will be very destabilizing not just for the region but also for Europe as a whole. We are Euro-Atlantic organization and what happens in this region affects the whole region

As you know, in the framework of the partnership with NATO Georgia is fulfilling an Annual National Plan. What is your vision? What is NATO's vision about the implementation of this process? What challenges do you see?

The Annual National Program is partner parcel of the discussion of Bucharest. Georgia would eventually be a member of the Alliance. What is important is that countries define their goals and move forward to membership. Identifying reforms and steps they have to take to move towards membership goal on which Georgia and we agreed.

The Annual National Program sets out in five chapters. Some are very general and political chapters and others are more technical. It is important that Georgia sets specific goals for each year. Some are long-term goals as the defense reform, which we just talked about, but some are short-term goals. You've had the experience of one. The progress you made was quite good and I think you learned how to develop a better document and how to achieve it. Therefore, we anticipate even more significant results in the year ahead. Overall, the impression is in both political dimension we have talked about elections, but also in the military reform area that you have made significant progress. However, the most important is that you set those goals and you did it realistically to fulfill them each year through the ANP that will move you toward membership.

After the advice and recommendation of the North-Atlantic Treaty Organization Georgia is working on the National Security Review process. How would you evaluate this process?

One of the things we emphasized is to have a National Security Concept. It is important that you make budget decisions and personnel decisions based on where you want the process to go. What are your defense needs? What are your defense goals? We don't want to define those goals for you but what we do fill is important is that you have a strong bases in the roles and the things that you want your defense ministry to do. These are not arbitrary decisions taken step-by-step along the way. That is why we try to get every country including the allied countries to have a national strategy and National Defence Review. For example, the United States has Quadrennial Defense Strategy and many allied countries have it. This important way that sets priorities under basis than more narrow decisions in personnel, in budgeting and things like that. Having a

basis in overall strategy makes it easier to work. That is what we urge to you. We do not urge particular items it is your business to set the goals.

Very interesting and considerably important projects are implemented under the initiative of NATO and the Georgian Ministry of Defense (For example, a military education project, a human resources project and the demilitarization "NAMSA" project). What is your evaluation of this?

I think they have been quite positive. It is important that we update them. We began the educational project when you were still deciding on your educational structure. You have now been more precise about that and we will have to equilibrate our education assistance to meet those needs. But we want to identify where NATO and NATO has limits, we are an international organization, we are not business providing military equipment, but in fact in the areas where we have expertise or can get expertise from the Allies like education, like helping with the manpower policy, like helping with strategic defence review. We want to help you and we are helping you but off course that means developing and working with the Allies. We have a regular process of meeting with the Allies, for the Allies themselves to develop experts they can give you. We also have decided last December to enhance our office here and to create NATO liaison office in Georgia and we have done that. It means that we will have and we have already sent three people and we will send more to provide assistance in specific areas within a single office where we can meet those needs.

The Georgian defense doctrine is being elaborated at the Ministry of Defense. What is your position about it?

It is a two-stage process. You have a strategic defense review we have talked about, and out of that becomes military doctrine. How the military does implements its aspect? It is a separate document but they should be consistent obviously. So it is a stage process but for very much the same reasons identified, the overall strategic review, a broad strategic document that sets out what are your strategic goals? How do you want to take it forward? The military doctrine is saying how Defence Ministry is going to apply that personnel, education and equipment projects. Again, the same process is what I just said. It's important to have those broad strategic documents that allows you to make subsidiary decisions under bases of those, have them in ordered fashion, understand why

you are doing it. That is very important and very positive.

Georgia participates in Afghanistan with the International Security Assistance Forces. NATO's Anders Fogh Rasmussen thanked the Georgian side and particularly the Georgian minister of defense for his active participation in the protection of global security. What is the international community's vision about it?

Afghanistan is the most important mission for NATO. It is important for the security of the allies and for global security. We cannot let the Afghanistan go back to be a failed state and the source for terrorism. We all face that goal. It is a dangerous for the world but certainly for the allies. We very much appreciate and certainly, I can echo what the Secretary-General said about Georgia's contribution. It is very significant contribution both in Kabul with the French and with the United States in assisting us in carrying out that mission. I do not discount for you that it is a very difficult year. Last year was not a happy year. The elections were not easy, besides we had some defeats. I think with the surge of forces that Georgia's contribution has permitted we have been able to take some steps forward towards the three goals that we have. One of the main goals is transition that is making Afghans play a big role. Besides, we will continue a presence to train and support the Afghans over the long period.

NATO has developed a new strategic concept, which is a very important document for NATO allies and for partner countries as well. What will be the result of this document for the Alliance?

We have a group of experts lead by former Secretary of States Madlen Albright. They did a study, contacted many people who had an interest in that. They have developed many aspects, which is widely available. That is not a strategic concept. It is not even a draft of it. It is their ideas and contribution toward the process. Under the leadership of Secretary-General, we are planning to begin draft the strategic concept. Off course, we will use ideas of these experts. It will face within the Alliance many the same issues that we've talked about for Georgia. What should be our strategy? What should be the balance between article 5, to defence our members and our missions like Afghanistan? In 1999 we set out three goals for the Alliance: The traditional article 5, plus partnerships, plus new missions.

Continued on p.3



Interview with NATO's special representative in South Caucasus and Central Asia Robert Simmons

Continued from p.1

However, what we are trying to do is to get the balance depending on the circumstances. Therefore, we look at how we can equilibrate the balance but with the consistency of the same free approaches. That is security for the Alliance - Article 5, probably putting a little more emphasize on Article 4 that is a consultation article that precedes using article 5. That will be a new step. We very much want to continue partnership, certainly with traditional partners like Georgia in APC and with new global partners like Pakistan, Afghanistan, Japan and others. Equally, we want to move forward on our ability to conduct the missions like Afghanistan or the counter-piracy mission of the coast of Somalia.

There are many things to be considered about NATO's open door policy. As you know, Russia openly resists these activities. Is it possible that Russia's indirect veto will influence and change NATO's principle?

Going back to the 1995 study and it has always been a position. We do not accept that any country has a veto or a control over that. We know the Russian position but it's for the Alliance to make that decision and based on its consensus and consensus within the Alliance. Therefore, it is not a question of giving a veto to any country, which is not a member of the Alliance. Obviously Russia raises issues with us. They did not like either the first three rounds of enlargement but in the end they acquiesced in it and we continue partnership. Yes we hear them, we understand their objections but this is not a veto. They can raise their objections and discuss them in various ways but in the end it is for us to decide.

Russia has also elaborated a new European Security Structure. International organizations do not like this document. What is NATO's position?

We have had a discussion with them. They proposed proposals in the OSCE context and bilateral treaty with NATO. First, remember that OSCE structure has never been legally binding, it always been politically binding and are very cautious over that. Some aspect like arms control could be legally binding, but the basic structure should be politi-

cally binding. Second what's important, I think all allies agree we must maintain the traditional balance of the OSCE which is to say - yes security is important, security is a major aspect but we should also have humanitarian and the economic dimensions. Therefore, what is important to us is to maintain the three balances of the structure. Security is not just a military issue, the Russian focus is only on security, and we have said we want to retain the balance of the three traditional OSCE baskets.

We know that NATO is cooperating with Russia on this issue.

NATO-Russia cooperation goes back a long time. In some areas like Afghanistan, counter-narcotics, counter-terrorism we have a wide range of agreements, even non-proliferation. Therefore, we have differences related to security proposals and we have to discuss them. We have a big difference over Georgia. We don't accept the acquisition of the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia and we've told the Russians that the territorial integrity of Georgia is very important for us. We've told the Russians that the territorial integrity of Georgia is very important for us and don't accept their efforts to change that. So we have differences and we have been clear in differences so cooperate where we can and I think there are a number of areas where we can cooperate but at the same time there are some areas where we won't compromise our positions.

Lisbon will host a NATO summit in November and Anders Fog Rasmussen outlined that new messages will be sent to countries seeking membership. What can we expect from the Lisbon Summit?

This is tied to the strategic concept in the declaration. On the one hand we will continue the process of enlargement. The open door will remain. We will also continue with the mandate from Bucharest, which is saying Georgia will become the member eventually. There will be new steps to try to enhance our cooperation, to advance that as we've discussed now. Obviously, we will have to work out some details of that but the principal that we want to take forward is certainly something we will identify.

Nini Bakradze, Irakli Gurgenzidze

Georgian Delegation in Afghanistan

Continued from p.1

Following the meeting with the coalition command the delegation headed for the province of Helmand, where the 31st Infantry Battalion of the Third Infantry Brigade of Georgian armed forces carries out military operations under the guidance of U.S. militaries. There the main task of Georgian peacekeepers is to provide patrolling on foot or by vehicle, convoying and a full range of anti-revolt operations. Georgian militaries cooperate with the Afghan National Police and the National Army as well with marines. They also render assistance to local population in order to improve their living conditions.

During the visit in Afghanistan, the Georgian high-ranking officials got familiar with the daily activities and living conditions of the Georgian militaries living in military bases. According to the Georgian visitors, the Georgian military units are successfully accomplishing the mission there; they enjoy the high level of trust from our partners, apply the modern technique, are courageous and get invaluable military experience.

"We are very satisfied to see our peacekeepers here in Afghanistan, get acquainted their living conditions and everyday activities. We are very happy with the fact that our militaries feel themselves very bravely and the most important is that they carry out peacekeeping mission from the frontline. They are enjoyed their foreign commanders confidence as are their partners from different countries. We are very delighted as American or French partners can't cover their excitement towards Georgian peacekeepers as they are dislocated on the hottest spot of the world and hoist Georgian national flag proudly. Participation in the ISAF mission is one of the biggest experiences for Georgian soldiers", Targamadze said.

It is very important that Georgian militaries participate in NATO-led ISAF mission along with American and British peacekeepers and protect Georgia's interests. It is a great experience for them and first of all a huge strengthening of Georgia and reinforcing its position in the integration process towards the Euro-Atlantic structure. During his visit to the Helmand province, Baramidze personally talked with the Georgian militaries to get known their living conditions or challenges during the mission.



The vice prime minister was satisfied as all Georgian peacekeepers have realized what a huge and important mission they are implementing for Georgia.

"We have met Georgian as well American leadership of our militaries and get acquainted to all issues related to strategic and tactical situation, where and what positions our militaries hold, future perspectives or tasks our peacekeepers have to carry out in future, also Georgian militaries' relation and cooperation with Afghan local authorities, army and police. During the mission Georgian peacekeepers receive huge experience by the advanced technologies with the modern army. After the mission our militaries will be trained on the highest level. Thus, we can't forget that this is a war with a lot of threats, but I am happy that within those conditions our militaries feel themselves bravely", Baramidze said.

As a permanent representative to NATO, Grigol Mgaloblishvili noted the task of the Delegation was to realize how Georgian peacekeepers feel themselves in the world's hottest spot. It is very glorious that Georgian soldiers carry out their mission perfectly. That's why all partner countries our militaries serve

with can't cover their excitement towards Georgian peacekeepers' courage and professionalism.

Currently, 750 servicemen carry out peacekeeping missions in the Helmand province. They started their mission in the Helmand province in April 2010. The Georgian battalion started preparation for the international peacekeeping mission in September 2009 and underwent six months of intensive preparation at the National Training Center "Krtsanisi" with the guidance of the U.S. Marine Corps Expeditionary Brigade. Several month tactical preparations were led in the US Joint Multinational Readiness Center (JMRC). Preparedness level of Georgian militaries was evaluated by the US Trainers and Advisor's Group of Marine Corps. From January 13, the 31st Battalion personnel underwent preparation at the U.S. military base in the German town Hohenfels.

Participation in international peacekeeping missions provides our military members the opportunity to obtain practical experience and to demonstrate our nation's readiness to cooperate with NATO and with other Partner Countries Forces.

Tea Kerzdevadze

Georgian Defense Conference

Batumi hosted the "Georgian Defense Conference" on June 17-18. The main goal and spirit of the Georgian Defense Conference 2010, like its predecessors, was to give the opportunity to all interested parties to cooperate and interact. If we consider that the conference was attended by, a great number of non-governmental organizations, the Ministry of Defense has continued to sustain transparency and wider participation as pillars of its defense policy.

The sides discussed current reforms and plans for the defense and security sector, as well as ongoing NATO-Georgia relations and the improvement of the Georgian defense capabilities. For two days, participants had a chance to address such important issues as the Strategic Defense Review, the National Security Review, Defense Reforms and the mission in Afghanistan.

One of the distinguished guests of the event, Robert Simmons, special representative of NATO's secretary general in the South Caucasus and Central Asia, extended his gratitude to the Minister of Defense Bacho Akhalaia for Georgia's active participation in international peacekeeping efforts in Afghanistan. Simmons

also declared that Georgia has taken the right course of reforms leading to the further development of the MoD and the capabilities of the armed forces.

During the event, participants declared again that NATO integration remains one of the main priorities for Georgia's security policy. "Current NATO-Georgian relations are an irreversible process directed at improvement of bilateral relations between Georgia and Alliance. Our collaboration is getting more fruitful and efficient as time passes on", Akhalaia said.

Alongside traditional topics, some new issues were included into the agenda. For example, participants had a panel on different models of defense structures. Outstanding representatives of governmental and non-governmental organizations and foreign partners addressed all these issues.

One of the main subjects of the conference was the Georgian Defense Doctrine. This document is one of the main guidance documents of the Georgian armed forces, which defines the role of the armed forces within the national security system in the context of country's security environment, establishes the



vision of the armed forces and principles of action in peacetime, crisis and war. This is a key document for the Georgian armed forces, which stands at the top of doctrinal hierarchy. It is designed to serve in the long term, but considering political, strategic and other changes, as well as time, circumstances and practical experience gained in future, it could be subject to changes and review. The defense doctrine is conceptually based upon and corresponds to the main tenets of the strategic documents

of Georgia. These documents are: National Security Concept, Threat Assessment Document, Georgian National Military Strategy, and its legal basis is the Constitution of Georgia, international treaties, the Laws of Georgia on defense and on the state of war, the regulations of the Ministry of Defense and Joint Staff of Georgia. Because of all above-mentioned issues, participants expressed big attention to this subject.

Georgia's Strategic Defense Review also was the focus of participants. SDR

in Georgian reality is a mid to long term document with the planning time horizon of up to 2015. This document employs a planning methodology, which is based not only capabilities, like in most NATO countries, but is also strictly focused on actual threats. The purpose of SDR is to identify optimal and affordable force structure for Georgian Armed Forces for the next five years. One of the speakers said that the security environment, which was changed since the August 2008 war, has caused MOD to overhaul its vision for the future. The work on SDR is organized on three levels. There is an SDR Commission headed by the Deputy Defense Minister and comprising senior decision makers. Below that level, there is the Core Working Group and functional Sub-Working Groups subordinated to it.

The Ministry of Defence of Georgia provided organizational support for the conference. Conference participants included the MoD and JS leadership, officials of different state entities, local and foreign experts and NATO International Service and Diplomatic Corps representatives.

Irakli Gurgenzidze

Contract-based Military Service

The establishment of professional armed forces is an important prerequisite for Georgia's integration in the North Atlantic Alliance. The Georgian Defense Ministry carries out intensive reforms to meet NATO standards and in the framework of ongoing reforms training of military personnel with new programs is a crucial part of that effort.

Conscription in the Georgian armed forces and their training within the frames of Basic Combat Training (BCT) Program started in the autumn of 2008. In 2009, 3,700 recruits passed through the training program and up to 1,200 military servicemen graduated the courses in 2010. The next call to join the army was announced on July 1. The special commission consisting of 11 members was set up and all volunteers willing to join the army are submitting all necessary documentation in the National Educational Center "Krtsanisi."

Citizens eligible for the professional military service in the Georgian armed forces must be within 18-35 age grades, as well as the persons in compulsory military service and conscripts who have already reached 18 years of age. Volunteers can have incomplete secondary, secondary and higher education. One of the necessary requirements to be enrolled at the Basic Combat Training (BCT) Courses is to pass through a selection process that includes their examination in physical fitness. Recruits will be asked to run on a defined distance,

do push-up and sit-up exercises. Successful candidates will pass through medical examination in the Gori military hospital.

The training program is scheduled to start on July 5, on the base of the 3rd Infantry Brigade located in Kutaisi. The goal of the courses is to prepare the individually well prepared, physically and psychologically strong, well-disciplined infantry military servicemen, who are well aware army general regulations. During nine months, they will attend the theoretical and practical trainings, army regulations, physical, and drilling, also, fire support exercises. Upon accomplishment of the courses recruits will be allocated to various military units according to their place of residence. During the study process, each soldier will receive the monthly salary equal to 150 GEL.

Defense Today interviewed the head of the Selection Commission, LTC Anzor Kobidze about the selection process, statistics and expected results. Physical tests were passed by 1,657 applicants. Medical examination was successfully passed by 849.

We have met and talked to some volunteers willing to be enrolled in the training courses in the National Educational Center "Krtsanisi." Beka Kacharava is from Abasha region. His only desire is to serve in the Georgian armed forces.

"I want to serve Georgia, serve my motherland as an ordinary soldier. I ful-



ly realize that I'll have to compromise many things. I am prepared that I'll have to go through a strong physical training but I am prepared for everything. If I successfully pass the entrance examinations, I'll quit learning and associate my future career to military life," Beka said.

Mikheil Kokashvili is from the village of Osiauri, Khashuri region. He has been dreaming to join the army since his childhood. When he reached the full legal age he did not think much, collected and submitted all necessary documents at the Basic Combat Training

Course. "I successfully passed the physical test. Now I have to go through medical examination. If I succeed and happen to be enrolled at the courses my childhood dream will come true," the recruit said.

Eka Gakhokidze

Aliante 2010



The final stage of the international youth competition "Aliante 2010" on NATO and security issues is hosted by Georgia this time. The opening ceremony of the final was organized at the Sachkhere Mountain Training School. Participants of the competition include representatives from NATO member and partner nations: Lithuania, Latvia, Czech Republic, Poland, Hungary, Mon-

tenegro, Georgia and Slovakia.

The opening ceremony was attended by the deputy defense minister, the Ministry of Education and Science representatives, Administration of State Minister on European and Euro-Atlantic Integration, and Diplomatic Corpse.

"Aliante" is a youth competition organized annually by NATO. The final part of the event is led for the first time

in Georgia, in Sachkhere Mountain Training School. It is notable that within the frames of bilateral cooperation with NATO, the school was officially granted the status of Training and Education Center of PfP (Partnership for Peace Program). Holding of competition in Georgia is one more positive step towards NATO integration," Nodar Kharshiladze said.

For four days participants went through particular tasks and exercises in the school. The project involved 20 teams from eight nations and covers two phases. On the first stage contestants answered the questions on NATO and security issues via internet, but on the final stage they opposed each other in obstacle overcoming, land navigation, fire and mountain preparation. 6 winner teams revealed during the contest will make a 10 day tour to Poland.

"Aliante 2010" was founded through the NATO's support in 2000 and aims to raise awareness on the military organization and corresponding security issues among the youth. The final part of competition is organized every year on military bases meeting the NATO standards.

Workshop for Public Affairs Officers (PAO)



Georgian military servants got familiar with public relations issues. The workshop for PAOs was organized within the frames of bilateral cooperation between Georgia and Lithuania. Trainings were led by the head of Planning, Policy and Analysis Division of Public Affairs Department of the Lithuanian Ministry of Defense Marius Alekna.

For two days attendees obtained useful information regarding public relations and strategic planning, media typology and working methods, messaging in the process of communication, writing a press-release and organizing the press conference. The participant could also learn the aspects of public relations during crisis situations along with general survey of public affairs field. By the end of the seminar, the of-

ficers had an opportunity to supplement their theoretical knowledge with practical skills.

"This course was initiated by both sides a couple of months ago. Agreement between the Georgian and Lithuanian Defense Ministries was signed and based on this bilateral agreement and training in public relations has been planned. Now we have this course here for military contingent. This is media relations and public relations basic course. The participants are going to be familiarized with basic public relations planning procedures with best practices and they will get some basic knowledge how to deal with media. We conduct the similar kind of training courses in Lithuania for our military contingent," Alekna said.

