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Ministry exhibits successes, future plans



The ministry presented an annual report about its achievements and plans earlier this month. As part of the governmental initiative, a five-hour exhibition was held Sept. 5 on Rustaveli Avenue, as well as in various regions outside the capital.

The Defense Ministry presented various types of combat and medical equipment employed by the army. The military introduced tactical and technical specifications of weaponry. The training facilities of the armed forces' Training and Military Education Command were also displayed. The exhibition also included a field hospital, tent for military personnel and kitchen, where visitors could try the food and rations prepared for soldiers under field conditions.

Important events ongoing within the armed forces and key defense priorities were present-

ed to visitors in magazines, newspapers and advertisements. The NATO Information Center dispersed literature on the alliance together with free gifts and booklets.

Prime Minister Nika Gilauri and Cabinet of Ministers members also participated in the event. Defense Minister Bacho Akhalaia and Chief of Joint Staff Major Gen. Devi Chankotadze answered questions from citizens. Akhalaia also spoke with journalists.

"This exhibition is a vivid demonstration of all the significant projects, implemented in recent years," he said. "We also presented a number of measures to be realized in the future, concerning the modernization of the army. Our report covers all aspects of the working process executed by the ministry. Our officers are also here and can provide detailed answers about mil-

itary activities to anyone who is interested."

As commander of the Third Infantry Brigade, Captain Iveri Subeliani said visitors showed the greatest interest in combat techniques and their characteristics.

"This event was met with immense interest in every Georgian region," Subeliani said. "The pavilion of ministry received special attention. We presented new equipment and our personnel provided detailed information about armaments of the armed forces."

The pavilions were displayed in Rustavi, Telavi, Qutaisi and Zugdidi.

President Mikheil Saakashvili also participated in the program, visiting Telavi where he gave a personal report about recent Georgian military achievements and continuing reforms.

Nino Mikeladze



Air force celebrates anniversary

The Georgian Air Forces celebrated their seventeenth anniversary in a solemn ceremony at the Alekseevka Military Airbase Sept. 19.

Defense Minister Bacho Akhalaia and Chief of Joint Staff of the Georgian Air Forces Maj. Gen. Devi Chankotadze congratulated military personnel. Military attaches accredited to Georgia, military servicemen family members and other guests were present at the ceremony.

Akhalaia and Chankotadze decorated the memorial to the Georgian military with wreaths. Up to 26 servants were awarded with the medals of General Kvinitadze, General Mazniashvili and Devoted to the Homeland award. Roughly 75 servicemen were granted honorary diplomas and 74 notes of appreciation from their commanders.

Akhalaia delivered a speech at the event, stating that "aviation represents one of the important components of the armed forces. If we look back to the past years, we see that our aviation units were persistently improving and increasing their professionalism. Though Georgian aviation might not be perfect at the present moment and needs further development, we can say for sure that aviation is a valuable component for the army. This is why I am here to congratulate the entire army on this significant occasion."

Following the official segment of the ceremony, armed forces personnel organized an exhibition for the guests and military attaches, displaying flight vehicles and aviation weaponry. Toward the end of the event, guests were given the chance to

watch simulated flight exercises.

The Georgian Air Force and Air Defense Division was established Jan. 1, 1992. On Aug. 10, 1993, it was transformed into a primary division. The two divisions were united on Aug. 18, 1998 and the joint structure was called the Georgian Air Forces.

The first combat flight was conducted by Izani Tsertsvadze and Valeri Nakofia on Sept. 19, 1992, which was later named Georgian Air Forces Day.

The Georgian Air Forces includes 2,971 military and civilian personnel; controls and defends air space over Georgia; conducts air intelligence and surveillance; conducts air evacuations and search and rescue operations; and executes the air movement of personnel and military cargo.



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“The program is a partnership requiring the full involvement and commitment of Georgia to succeed”

Interview with David Johnson, Acting Professional Development Program (PDP) Manager

The effective management of human resources and enhancing the professional skills of civilian officials is one of the main priorities of the Defense Ministry. Integration policy into NATO requires a rapid reformation process. The Professional Development Program launched in May 2009 aims to strengthen the capacity of democratic management and oversight of Georgia's security sector and support objectives related to Georgia's Euro-Atlantic integration.

In mid-September, UK Special Defense Adviser to the Georgian Defense Ministry Stephen Glover and Acting Program Manager in the Georgian Defense Ministry David Johnson held the next round of seminars for ministry personnel. The seminars aimed to enhance the professional skills of ministry civilian personnel via courses, training and workshops at the ministry and a training center soon to open at the government agency.



Defense Today interviewed David Johnson, who elaborated on the importance of the program and future prospects of its implementation in Georgia.

Defense Today: What are the goals and objectives of the NATO-Georgia Professional Development Program?

David Johnson: The overall aim of the NATO-Georgia PDP is to strengthen the capacity for democratic management and oversight of Georgia's security sector and support the overall objectives related to Georgia's Euro-Atlantic integration. The program will do this by assisting Georgia in enhancing the professional skills of civilian officials in defense and security institutions.

Participating nations support the aims of this program because it works in favor of a basic principle shared among Allies and partners realize that effective democratic management and oversight of the defense and security sector is essential for the ability to exercise civil and democratic control over security forces. The program takes full account of Georgia's Annual National Program and PDP Assessment, and is tailored to address related shortfalls identified under those processes. From that perspective, an enhanced capability for the Defense Ministry to carry out its headquarters functions in support of the Georgian armed forces is another desired outcome of our efforts

Q: When was it decided to implement this program in Georgia? How long will it last and how is the program managed by NATO?

A: Participating nations agreed in May 2009 to implement the program. The program was first requested by your ministry in August 2008, and was implemented after extensive consultations between NATO and Defense Ministry experts and subsequent political discussions at NATO. According to the current program plan, which is a flexible and living document, the program is currently foreseen to run over three two-year phases. This does not foreclose the possibility that the program could continue beyond six years.

However, the capabilities we are assisting Georgia in developing are inherent in a well-functioning governmental organization. For that reason, the vision for the program includes the gradual development within the Defense Ministry (and other organizations later) of the organizational structures and capacities to sustain professional development of the staff on an independent basis. Should we succeed along those lines, we could expect these functions of this program to transfer gradually to the appropriate Defense Ministry staff elements. In other words, the PDP should work itself out of a job. That is why it has been conducted as a

partnership from day one with full participation and support by the Defense Ministry. This includes close cooperation with the Defense Ministry Human Resources Department in program implementation and with the International Relations and Euro-Atlantic Integration Department from a policy perspective.

NATO and Georgia manage the program together. A program steering committee, comprising of representatives of participating nations and Georgia, provides oversight and guidance from a headquarters policy perspective. In addition to Georgia, the 10 participating nations are Denmark, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Sweden, Turkey, the UK and U.S. The UK and the Nordic-Baltic Initiative nations (Denmark, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, and Sweden) share lead-nation responsibilities. The NATO International Staff Defense Policy and Planning Division is the executing agent responsible for implementation of the program.

The critical management element for day-to-day implementation is the program team based here in Tbilisi. This team is made up of a program manager from an Allied or partner nation and an assistant (or deputy) program manager from the Defense Ministry staff. This team works very closely with the Defense Ministry Human Resources Department in the day-to-day program implementation. The program team and Human Resources Department work together to ensure the right people get the right training, primarily by running a selection panel to interview prospective trainees. The UK has provided important support to the program by the appointment of a special defense adviser to the Georgian Defense Ministry, Stephen Glover. Finally, a program board, chaired by Deputy Minister Vashakidze and including representatives from across the Ministry, the program team and invited observers from the joint staff, provides the ministry full visibility of the program and the ability to give guidance on its daily implementation.

In terms of what is delivered, the program currently provides for four main types of training. First, there are the training opportunities abroad, provided by contributing nations. These are focused on individuals and can be training slots in language courses and in courses tailored to specific functional areas. Second, there are internships ranging from a week to several weeks or months in which a specialist can obtain on-the-job experience at NATO headquarters or in the capitals of contributing nations. Third, there are mobile training teams, which nations can

send to Georgia to provide training in specific functional areas and specialties to groups of staff members. This is a very cost-effective means of delivery and well-suited to certain topics. Then, there is training that can be provided locally by the program team on an ongoing basis in order to improve staff capabilities in several generic areas.

Q: What was the main reason to launch the PDP in Georgia and what can you tell me about the importance of the program for NATO?

A: The participating nations were willing to support your Ministry's request for establishment of this program because, as I said, the kind of assistance to be provided will strengthen the capacity for democratic management and oversight of Georgia's security sector, which is an important principle among NATO nations and partners.

At the practical level, the further that Georgia progresses in implementing the experience gained through the program, the more effective a partner it will be in the various areas in which it cooperates with NATO, the upcoming Georgian contribution to ISAF being one important example.

Q: What impact will this program have on Georgia's Euro-Atlantic integration?

A: The development of capacity for

Defense Ministry staff before launching the program. As for differences, I would say the main one is in the relative size of the organizations we are dealing with in Kiev and Tbilisi respectively.

The Defense Ministry staff in Ukraine has numbers in the thousands, while here in Tbilisi, it is around 500. This has enabled us, so far, to become very familiar with the specifics of the problems the Georgian Defense Ministry wants to address and to work closely with the staff to find solutions.

Q: What about the NATO countries; do they use the same kinds of programs for professional development of their employees?

A: We base our program on the capabilities and competencies that are a standard part of the business culture in NATO and Allied nations. That is not to say that NATO or any Allied nation has achieved perfection in this field – far from it. However, there is an ingrained awareness and pursuit of best practice and professional development is an area of ongoing investment. That is why part of the program vision is to develop the same awareness and capability to sustain professional development on an independent basis in the Defense Ministry.

Q: What challenges and obstacles do you see during the implementation

Q: What methods and approach do you use to achieve the best possible outcome?

A: The most important element of our common approach is that the program is a partnership requiring the full involvement and commitment of Georgia to succeed. Each level of program management and every aspect of the training delivered takes account of this important requirement. Hand-in-hand with that guiding principle is the notion of transparency and accountability to the participating nations who are investing in the program.

By those means, we are able to cement the partnership and ensure continued support. As for implementation on the ground, we try to ensure at each step that the right people get the right training and are subsequently placed to ensure maximum benefit to the organization. We also build in feedback at each step to ensure the program's continuous improvement and its flexibility to address emerging requirements.

In the end, the desired outcome is change within the Defense Ministry – progress in resolving the capability shortfalls that have been identified. That is a much more important measure of success than the inputs: the number of training opportunities provided. So it gets back to accountability, in the first



UK Special Defense Adviser to the Georgian Defense Ministry Stephen Glover conducts seminar for ministry personnel

democratic management and oversight of the security sector and of security forces is an important step toward Euro-Atlantic integration.

Q: Do you have any experience of implementing the professional development program with other partner nations and, if yes, can you tell us the similarities and differences?

A: We have been running a PDP with Ukraine for almost four years now. I think that program inspired the request by your Ministry. In order to achieve maximum efficiency, we have modeled the program in Georgia on the one in Ukraine and have drawn heavily on the experience and lessons learned there. The management structure and processes of the two programs are quite similar.

However, we also wanted to avoid a cookie-cutter approach and ensure the program in Tbilisi was tailored to Georgia's specific needs and circumstances. That is part of the reason that we conducted months of consultations with the

phase of the program in Georgia?

A: The program is demanding in terms of resources: finance, time, skilled personnel and training opportunities. The most immediate challenge has been the impact of the global financial crisis. Nations wishing to participate in the program are able to do so by contributing cash to the program trust fund or making contributions-in-kind of training opportunities.

As I said, we currently have 10 participating nations, but that number would be closer to 15 if not for the impact on defense budgets of the financial crisis. Nevertheless, nations fully funded our 2009 financial requirements and gave us a solid start toward 2010. Given the number of priority issues vying for attention within NATO, it will be an ongoing challenge to maintain focus on this program. That is where strong political and practical commitment on the part of Georgia will be crucial in encouraging ongoing support and investment by NATO nations and partners.

place, on the part of the individuals who receive training to demonstrate how they have applied the experience. Secondly, on the part of the organization to demonstrate support and adoption of the training, experience and best practices delivered through the program.

Q: What benefits can the participants in the program gain?

A: From the perspective of the program, the most important benefit to individuals would be an improvement in their ability to effect positive change in their areas of responsibility whether that be in policy development, defense planning, human resources, budget and finance, security or any other functional area. There are several possible benefits that would naturally flow from this, including enhanced professional credentials, chances for advancement and improved understanding of methods and approaches by professional counterparts in NATO.

Georgia looks to establish professional NCO Corps



The Non-Commissioned Officer Corps (NCO) is often referred to as “the backbone” of the armed services. NCOs are the primary and most visible leaders for the bulk of service personnel – the enlisted officers and military servants – as not a single commander has such close contact with corporals as NCOs. NCOs are the primary military leaders responsible for executing the military organization’s mission and training military personnel.

In the Georgian armed forces, the preparation of professional NCO is provided by the NCO School founded in 2003 in Gori. The school later moved from Gori to the Krtsanisi National Training Center. Since March 1, 2007, the school has been an independent military educational institution subordinate to the Educational Command of the Joint Staff.

At the first stage, the NCO School only provided training for section commanders. Today, the functions of the educational institution have considerably increased. According to the chief of the NCO School, Capt. Zurab Khvichia, the institution is responsible for training and retraining section commanders and platoon sergeants for military units. Three training courses are currently offered – a basic training course for section commanders of light infantry specialties, a platoon sergeants course and a transformation course for personnel who have not yet passed the needed training courses.

The school’s curriculum fully corresponds with NATO standards. The meth-

odology and program is mainly German-based, but tailored to Georgian specifics and adjusted to the regulations of the Georgian armed forces. Students begin with theoretical training and then gain practical experience on the field. Future sergeants learn to assemble and disassemble a weapon. They also have a green season with day and night marches on various training grounds in Kojori, Krtsanisi and Shavnabada.

Khvichia said the major goal of the NCO School is to form a professional corps equipped with the necessary theoretical knowledge and skills required from instructors.

Germany has played an important role in the development of the NCO School. In 2006, the German Infantry School of Hammelburg and NCO School concluded a partnership agreement to intensify cooperation between the military educational institutions of the two countries.

Cooperation between Georgia and Germany began much earlier. In 1995, over 350 officers and NCOs were trained in Germany. The Georgian peacekeeping contingent that performed the mission in Kosovo and Afghanistan were also retrained in Germany.

Since 2003, Germany has a permanent representative at the Defense Ministry with the mission to strengthen bilateral cooperation between the countries and take an active part in establishing a professional NCO corps.

Defense Today talked about this and other important issues to **German Military Adviser Bernhard Hopp**.

Defense Today: The German side actively provides assistance to the Georgian NCO School. What was the main reason to choose namely the NCO corps?

Bernhard Hopp: Other NATO countries mainly render assistance to Georgia in terms of the preparation of officers’ corps. The German side expressed a willingness and readiness to participate in the creation of a NCO corps. In order to have professional sergeants, it is necessary to provide qualified training. Thus, the German side decided to support the establishment of the NCO School and its development. We are working intensively in this direction even today.

Q: In which spheres does Germany provide assistance to the Georgian armed forces?

A: We assist the NCO School in all directions, but namely raising the qualifications of the personnel in Germany and developing curriculum and methodology. Germany also provides material assistance to the Georgian armed forces. Various vehicles have been transferred to the Georgian side, such as cars, high mobility vehicles and ambulances.

Q: As you already mentioned, you support the preparation of qualified NCOs. Have you encountered any problems doing so in Georgia?

A: I think military servicemen should receive the rank of sergeant only after passing special courses at the NCO School. The study process must be standardized as well. The officers and sergeants are not prepared according to the same standards. All this hinders coordinated activities.

Q: How can you assess the level of preparedness of NCOs? Do they meet the international standards?

A: The multinational exercises, Cooperative Longbow and Cooperative Lancer, demonstrated that the sergeants who trained at the NCO School at section level successfully performed their tasks. Providing preparation for NCOs in various specialties is also a priority. Some time ago, the curriculum was developed. This summer, we plan to launch sergeant artillery, communications, engineering, tank and mechanized infantry courses to support the professional development of the NCOs. Generally speaking, the practical skills and abilities of sergeants prepared at the NCO School are at the highest level and correspond with NATO standards.

Eka Gakhokidze



Boland meets with defense minister

Frank Boland, head of the Force Planning Directorate at the NATO headquarters, paid an official visit to Georgia. Defense Minister Bacho Akhalaia hosted the high-ranking official at ministry.

Boland chaired the delegation of the NATO experts visiting Georgia.

Since 2003, top NATO officials have been in charge of the Force Planning Directorate at the Defense Policy and Planning Department. They take responsibility for conducting the force planning process, not only in the alliance member, but also in partner countries.

The goal of the visit was to evaluate the accomplishments of the planning and review process and obligations under the Defense Ministry’s Annual National Plan. In the framework of the visit, Boland held meetings with Georgia’s interior, finance and European and Euro-Atlantic Integration ministers, security council management and EU monitoring mission.

The NATO experts held their final meeting at the Defense Ministry Sept. 10. NATO consultants appreciated the reforms executed throughout the year by the ministry.

Defense Ministry welcomes U.S. deputy assistant secretary of state

In the framework of an introductory visit, U.S. European and Eurasian Affairs Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Tina Kaidanow visited the Defense Ministry earlier this month. Defense Minister Bacho Akhalaia, Deputy Minister Nikoloz Vashakidze and International Relations and Euro-Atlantic Integration Department head Marika Laliashvili hosted the high-ranking official.

Foreign guests representing the U.S. at the meeting were Defense Attache

Col. Matthew Brand, Political and Economic Section Chief Julie Fisher and Charge d’Affaires Kent Longsdon.

The key topics of discussion were continuing ministry reforms, the transformation of the national defense sector and the priorities of the Georgian armed forces. The significance was also stressed of Georgia’s participation in ISAF operations and its fulfillment of the commitments stipulated by the U.S.-Georgia Charter on Strategic Partnership.



U.S. experts visit Georgia

High-ranking officials of the U.S. George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies visited Georgia earlier this month. The U.S. experts also visited the Defense Ministry.

The goal of the visit was to review issues of interdepartmental coordination in security sector management and national security revision.

At the meeting, the experts took an interest in the progress of the National Security Review defense sector, and studied local needs and capacities in this regard.

The official delegation comprised the following top officials: Dr. John M.

Treddenick, professor of Defense Economics and chairman of the Department of Nonresident Activities at the George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies; Vernon Hodges, Eurasia Security Sector Reform strategist for the George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies and Tiffany Petros, a defense reform supporter of the Office of the Secretary of Defense/Partnership Strategy and Stability Operations.

Among the Georgian representatives attending the meeting were Defense Ministry leaders and ODC and CUBIC teams. The U.S. experts also held meetings in various governmental entities.



German defense attache visits Kazbegi



Two years have passed since German Defense Attache Lt. Col. Christian Farkhondeh began his work in Georgia. Farkhondeh is deeply involved in defense reforms in the country, and regularly attends every important event organized by the Defense Ministry.

Farkhonde is keen to learn about

Georgian culture and nature, and spends his free time sightseeing throughout the country. The defence attache has stated his love of Georgian churches and mountainous regions. On Sept. 14, Farkhondeh visited Kazbegi Mountain.

"I was in Shatili, Mestia, and Ushguli, but to be on the top of Kazbegi was

something very extraordinary. It was something special," he said. He was accompanied by a diplomat and colleague from the police. They were led by two Georgian guides.

The trip continued for four days. Before the expedition, group members trained eight Sundays in various locations such as the Lomisi Monastery and mountains around Mtskheta and Tbilisi Lake.

The team started their expedition at Stepantsminda. Later, they took a horse for their luggage and moved to a camping site built by German prisoners after WWII. Before heading further up the mountain, the expedition members prayed in a small church.

The path to summit was very rough, Farkhondeh recalled. Reaching the top of the mountain, he said, he felt proud of his success and raised both the Georgian and German flags. Farkhondeh said after this tour he felt deeply connected to Georgia.

"It was emotionally and physically the most incredible experience I have ever had," he said. "I know about the

legend of Amirani who was chained on Kazbegi. There is a special aura around the mountain. I had tears in my eyes. I carried the German and Georgian flags from the mountain. It was the most emotional

moment of my life, even more than the birth of my daughter."

Farkhondeh plans to repeat the expedition next year, but said next time he will be better prepared.

Nino Gogochishvili



Military servicemen participate in harvest

Georgian military servicemen participated in the crop harvesting process in the Kakheti region. The Tenth Cadre Brigade of the National Guard Department in Telavi spent their time picking grapes together with Telavi, Kvareli and Gurjaani citizens.

The Defense Ministry offered assistance to families who could not afford to hire the required labor to harvest their crops. The department and province representatives made a list of these families.

National Guard Department head Zurab Arsoshvili also took part in the harvest. He noted that the military ser-

vicemen will provide assistance to local residents until all the crops are gathered.

"We are in the Akhaltsikhe village," Arsoshvili said. "Our units moved out to various directions to get engaged in the harvesting process. I should mention that our efforts to stand by the local population will be frequent and continue until the end of the harvest. Local residents have started appealing for help and our soldiers stand ready to meet their requirements. At the first stage, up to 50 families appealed to ministry and this number may increase in the future."



U.S. marines help disabled children

The Martkopi Specialized Organization for People with Disabilities held a charity event to help disabled children Sept. 18 with Georgian military servicemen and the U.S. Marine Corps. The U.S. military personally offered their assistance to the organization during their visit to the country.

As Master Sgt. Brent L. Dorough said, the goal of their visit was not only to train Georgian servicemen, but to help those in need.

"Helping mentally disabled children is a matter of dignity for all of us," Dorough said. "Alongside Georgian servicemen, there are U.S. Marines and Air

Force and Fleet personnel, standing ready to work side-by-side. Today, instead of having a rest, we decided to come here and make our share of contribution voluntarily."

According to U.S. Lt. Col. Dan T. Thoele, such assistance will continue in the future.

"The planned works will continue for several weeks," he said.

Assistance was arranged for the Martkopi-based organization due to a shortage of funds. Military servicemen from both sides express their willingness to continue helping the organization in the future.

Armed forces holds first wrestling competition

The first wrestling tournament for Georgian armed forces members was held at the Joint Staff Sports Hall Sept. 24. Eighty-three soldiers in various weight categories participated in the competition. The goal of the event was to popularize wrestling in the armed forces.

Successful competitors received permission after the event to participate in other tournaments.

The tournament was organized by the Administrative Department's Sports Service at the Joint Staff and Georgian National Wrestling Federation's Sports and Youth Department. Servicemen showed immense interest in the competition.

"The popularization of the sport in the Georgian armed forces is one of the main priorities of the ministry," Joint Staff Senior Sergeant Aluda Kopaliani said. "This day clearly demonstrates our approach to sports. Now, we are holding a wrestling tournament, but we are also going to organize competitions in other sports. Such competitions will help our soldiers to develop their physical fitness, which will help them better implement their military missions."

Tournament co-organizer, Georgian National Wrestling Federation President



Ushangi Kurashvili gave a positive evaluation of the event.

"The interest of our soldiers in Georgian wrestling is high," he said. "There are many familiar faces here who participated in the world and national championship and many other international tournaments. After this event we will establish a ministry team that will par-

ticipate in other sports competitions."

First place went to the armed forces' special operations team. The winners received diplomas, medals and cups. At the end of the competition, Sports Service Administration head Revaz Kiladze noted that none of the participants were injured during the event.

Tea Ivanishvili

Saint Vakhtang Gorgasali Cathedral ground-laying ceremony held



A new church is being constructed in remembrance of the soldiers who perished during the war last August. The foundation of the Saint Vakhtang Gorgasali Cathedral was first laid Sept. 15, where Archbishop Father Theodore consecrated the groundwork and held a public prayer.

Together with ecclesiastical figures, the ground-laying ceremony was attended by family members and relatives of deceased servicemen, Deputy Defense Minister Nika Dzimtseishvili, Georgian MPs and other officials.

"The cathedral's construction and praying is the only thing we can do for our fallen heroes," Dzimtseishvili said.

The construction is carried out with the blessing of Georgian Patriarch Ilia II and upon the initiative of the Vakhtang Gzrishvili Fund.