



საქართველოს სტრატეგიისა და საერთაშორისო ურთიერთობათა კვლევის ფონდი  
GEORGIAN FOUNDATION FOR STRATEGIC AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

33

**RUSSIAN-ABKHAZIAN DRAFT TREATY ON ALLIANCE  
AND INTEGRATION AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR  
GEORGIA**

*EUGENE KOGAN*

**EXPERT OPINION**



**2014**



საქართველოს სტრატეგიისა და საერთაშორისო ურთიერთობათა კვლევის ფონდი  
GEORGIAN FOUNDATION FOR STRATEGIC AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

## **EXPERT OPINION**

**EUGENE KOGAN**

**RUSSIAN-ABKHAZIAN DRAFT TREATY ON ALLIANCE  
AND INTEGRATION AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR GEORGIA**

**33**

**2014**



The publication is made possible with the support of the US Embassy in Georgia.

Editor: Jeffrey Morski  
Technical Editor: Artem Melik-Nubarov

All rights reserved and belong to Georgian Foundation for Strategic and International Studies. No part of this publication may be reproduced in any form, including electronic and mechanical, without the prior written permission of the publisher.

Copyright © 2014 Georgian Foundation for Strategic and International Studies

ISSN 1512-4835  
ISBN 978-9941-0-7339-7

The main purpose of this paper is to assess the recently proposed Draft Treaty, also called the Draft Agreement, between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Abkhazia on Alliance and Integration. The analysis focuses upon two major elements of this draft treaty: defence and security, and border protection and law enforcement while highlighting the reaction of Abkhazia, Georgia and Russia alongside the implications of the draft treaty for Georgia and concluding with a clearly elaborated conclusion.

### **The Initial Stage: Raul Khajimba's Election and Khajimba's Expressed Interest in "Integration" with Russia**

On 24 August 2014 Raul Khajimba was finally elected as the de facto leader of Abkhazia. At a press conference the day after his election, Khajimba expressed interest in coming up with a document about "integration" with Russia as its northern neighbour and the main source of its military and financial support. The expression "integration" [back then, author's comment] could mean anything but has been named as possibly removing all de facto border controls between Abkhazia and Russia.

Tbilisi, which generally avoids overtly antagonising Moscow over separatist matters these days, has not responded.<sup>1</sup> Whether or not it was a mistake will be discussed further below.

On 27 August 2014 during his *first* [author's italics] trip to Russia, Khajimba and President Vladimir Putin discussed a "unified defence space" and uniting the Abkhazian armed forces with the Russian troops in the territory under a single command [of, presumably, Russia although this issue was omitted, author's comment]. Both issues are to be worked out in a new agreement to be completed by the end of the year. The third issue that was emphasised by Caucasus expert, Vladimir Zakharov, relates to maritime security. Since the sea border remains open, the border guards responsible for maritime border control should be properly equipped [and trained, author's comment] and Russia should do this as a result of its experience in the matter.

Enthusiasm about the alliance [no word about integration was yet mentioned, author's comment] with Russia is far from universal in Abkhazia. Even if defence issues are not the most sensitive between the two countries, sceptics of Russia in Abkhazia *accept* [author's italics] the need for a Russian security umbrella<sup>2</sup> against Georgia. In the words of Vitaliy Gabinya, Abkhazia's de facto Vice President "We think that the Russian, Abkhazian and South Ossetian [defence] agreement will be a healthy response to the steps taken by the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) and its partner, Georgia."<sup>3</sup> Thus, in this clearly formulated format of countering the

adversary for the time being, the bilateral and not yet trilateral agreement should be viewed and assessed.

Khajimba stated clearly that a new comprehensive co-operation treaty with Russia will enhance its military alliance with Moscow and help to modernise the Abkhazian army. The modernisation of the army means an “increase of the army’s level of material-technical support, an increase in its military preparedness and a significant increase in the salaries and social protection of servicemen.” To link and reinforce the army’s modernisation process with a younger generation, Khajimba proposes making an effort to “increase the prestige” of the military service among the youth and boost “military-patriotic” education.<sup>4</sup>

Even though it was Khajimba who initiated the idea of a new comprehensive treaty with Russia, it was Putin’s team which presented a proposed draft of the new treaty. In order not to be blamed for a lack of democracy and transparency, the text of the Draft Agreement between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Abkhazia on Alliance and Integration was made public after it was posted on the website of the official Abkhazian news agency, *Apsnipress*, on 13 October 2014. Even before the text was released, Khajimba met with members of the breakaway region’s parliament and asked them “to prepare their remarks and proposals” on the draft agreement which was presented to Sokhumi by Russia.<sup>5</sup> For an analysis of the draft treaty and the Abkhazian reaction to it, see below.

The draft agreement on alliance and integration consists of 25 articles while just Articles 5 to 11 pertained to defence and security, border protection and law enforcement namely, the articles relevant to this analysis. An additional article needs to be mentioned namely, Article 24 that explicitly states that this treaty is concluded for an indefinite period.<sup>6</sup> In other words, if and when this treaty is concluded it will convey a clear message to Tbilisi: Moscow and Sokhumi have reached a point of no return and Tbilisi can forget about its idea of offering Abkhazia a broad autonomy in Georgia.

The relevant articles for our purpose entail the following points:

- (Article 5) Formation of a common space of security and defence requires the conducting of consultations on issues affecting the security interests of the Contracting Parties and the harmonisation of a common position on them. [This sentence sounds overtly optimistic since it presents both sides as equal in the business. Whether or not there will be consultations and a common position remains to be seen, author’s comment.]

- Creation of a common defence infrastructure. [What exactly this common defence infrastructure entails remains for the time being unknown, author's comment.]
- Establishment of the Joint Group of Troops (Forces) of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation and the Armed Forces of the Republic of Abkhazia to repel aggression (armed attack) in accordance with Article 51 of the UN Charter and the formation of a regulatory body of this group. [The content of Article 51 of the UN Charter is not spelled out.]
- Joint actions for the protection of the state border of the Republic of Abkhazia.
- The collective defence clause means (Article 6) that aggression (armed attack) by any state or group of states will be considered as aggression (armed attack) also against the other.
- In the case of an act of aggression (armed attack) against one, the other shall provide the necessary assistance, including military assistance, as well as support with the *means at its disposal* [author's italics, formulation is very ambiguous, author's comment] in the exercise of the right to collective defence in accordance with Article 51 of the UN Charter.
- On the measures taken under Article 51, the Contracting Parties shall immediately notify the UN Security Council. In the implementation of these measures, the Contracting Parties shall comply with the relevant provisions of the UN Charter.
- (Article 7) To repel aggression (armed attack) against any of the Contracting Parties, the Contracting Parties shall establish a Joint Group of Troops (Forces) of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation and the Armed Forces of the Republic of Abkhazia under the control of the Joint Command and common defence infrastructure not later than one year after the entry into force of this Treaty. [In other words, we need to wait until late December 2015 to see what exactly a common defence infrastructure will look like, author's comment.]
- During the direct threat of aggression and wartime, the commander of the Joint Group of Troops (Forces) of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation and the Armed Forces of the Republic of Abkhazia shall be appointed by the authorised body of the Russian Federation. [The deputy commander of the Joint Group of Forces would be appointed by Sokhumi. In peacetime command of the Joint Group of Troops (Forces) would be rotated between the two sides. See note 15. How do we measure the direct threat of aggression - 24 to 72 hours, less and/or more?]

- Composition of the Joint Group of Troops (Forces) of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation and the Armed Forces of the Republic of Abkhazia, the order of its formation, operation, deployment, supply and procedure for its management are determined by a *separate treaty* [author's italics] which the Contracting Parties shall conclude no later than three months from the date of entry into force of this Treaty. [In other words, no later than 31 March 2015, author's comment].
- (Article 8) In order to achieve the operational (tactical) compatibility of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Abkhazia with the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation, not later than three years from the date of entry into force of this Treaty [namely by late 2017, author's comment], the Contracting Parties shall undertake a phased harmonisation of the standards of military control, logistics, money allowances and the social security of the servicemen and also jointly organise the preparation of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Abkhazia in accordance with the normative legal acts of the Russian Federation.
- Financing costs related to the implementation of the measures provided for in this Article shall be carried out by the Russian Federation in the order determined by a separate agreement<sup>7</sup> [author's italics] no later than six months from the date of entry into force of this Treaty.<sup>8</sup> [In other words, no later than 30 June 2015, author's comment.]
- (Article 9) The Contracting Parties undertake to implement a coherent set of measures that will provide for the common defence and security of the Abkhazian-Georgian state border as well as the *full freedom* [author's italics] of crossing the Russian-Abkhazian state border with due account for *restrictions imposed for security reasons* [author's italics, at any time suitable for Russia. In other words, the Abkhazian government has no say on the matter. The 2014 Sochi Winter Olympic Games clearly demonstrated that point when the Russian-Abkhazian state border was closed to the Abkhazian population, author's comment<sup>9</sup>] not later than two years from the date of entry into force of this Treaty. [Namely, by late 2016, author's comment].

The following articles pertained to the issue of border protection and law enforcement.

The set of measures specified in Part 2 of Article 9 includes (but is not limited to):

- A gradual reduction of forces and means, for carrying out the defence and protection of the Russian-Abkhazian state border
- Redeployment of forces and means, for carrying out the defence and

protection of the Russian-Abkhazian state border to the Abkhazian-Georgian state border

- Organisation of joint control related to checking the grounds for permission of state border crossing by persons, vehicles, cargo goods and animals at checkpoints across the state border located on the territory of the Republic of Abkhazia, including checkpoints at seaports and airports. [It is not surprising that joint control related to checkpoints at seaports and airports was criticised by Abkhazian parliamentarians. See note 10. It is basically says that the Republic of Abkhazia is not an independent sovereign state but rather a subject of the Russian Federation, author's comment. As a result, this article was removed from the text. See note 17.]
- Definition of the powers and procedures for the competent authorities of the Russian Federation and the Republic of Abkhazia in the implementation of proceedings on administrative violations in the field of protection of the state border.

The competent authorities of the Contracting Parties shall agree upon the set of measures specified in Paragraph 2 of this Article and plan for its implementation not later than six months from the date of entry into force of this Treaty. [In other words, by 30 June 2015, author's comment.]

- (Article 10) In order to coordinate efforts to counter organised crime and other dangerous types of crime and extremism on the territory of the Republic of Abkhazia, the Contracting Parties shall create on the territory of the Republic of Abkhazia a Joint Coordinating Centre of the Bodies of Internal Affairs, not later than one year from the date of entry into force of this Treaty. [Namely, by late 2015, author's comment.]
- The order of the formation and activities of the Joint Coordinating Centre of the Bodies of Internal Affairs, its powers and place of dislocation are determined by a *separate agreement* [author's italics. Why do the Contracting Parties need a separate agreement? No explanation was given, author's comment] which the Contracting Parties shall conclude not later than three months from the date of entry into force of this Treaty. [Namely, by 31 March 2015, author's comment.]
- The Republic of Abkhazia with the methodological assistance of experts from the Russian Federation shall develop and adopt normative legal acts necessary for the implementation of the power of the Joint Coordinating Centre of the Bodies of Internal Affairs, not later than one year from the date of entry into force of this Treaty. [Namely, by late 2015, author's comment.]



- The competent authorities of the Contracting Parties shall agree upon the list of normative legal acts necessary for the implementation of the powers of the Joint Coordinating Centre of the Bodies of Internal Affairs not later than three months from the date of entry into force of this Treaty. [Namely, by 31 March 2015, author’s comment.]
- (Article 11) Citizens of the Republic of Abkhazia, *having citizenship of the Russian Federation* [author’s italics], shall have the right to carry out military service under contract in the military units and formations of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation dislocated on the territory of the Republic of Abkhazia, the Joint Group of Troops (Forces), the Unified Command and service in the Joint Coordinating Centre of the Bodies of Internal Affairs. Terms of military service in the indicated military units, formations and bodies, and the order of service in the Joint Coordinating Centre of the Bodies of Internal Affairs are governed by normative legal acts of the Russian Federation.<sup>10</sup> [In other words, the Abkhazian citizens who do **not** have citizenship of the Russian Federation are likely to be marginalised, author’s comment].

For the issue of equipping and training of the Abkhazian armed forces with modern weaponry, see note 17. For a joint provision of engineering and technical equipping of the Abkhazian-Georgian border, see note 18.

It is evident that the proposed draft treaty is too general and it leaves us with many questions to ponder alongside hitherto incomplete aims. Still, Article 8 refers to a medium-term perspective namely, three years. The most important and perhaps crucial point for the Republic of Abkhazia namely, the financial costs, are to be elaborated by a separate agreement not later than six months. Although Russia agreed upon financing the costs related to the implementation of the measures, the insistence of the Abkhazian government for signing the separate agreement not later than six months shows that the Abkhazian government realised the importance of the financial costs. Article 9 leaves Abkhazian citizens in limbo since Moscow can decide at any suitable time for Moscow to close the Russian-Abkhazian state border. At the same time, it also clearly stipulates in the case of Article 11 that citizens of the Republic of Abkhazia, having **no** citizenship of the Russian Federation, will not be treated as equal. If and when the final treaty is concluded, it will annex Abkhazia into Russia with Abkhazian citizens having little to say on the decisions made by Russia. The Russian officials will dismiss the author’s comment out of hand.

Interestingly enough, some senior officials in the breakaway region of Abkhazia expressed concerns over “losing sovereignty” and suggested that the tabled initial text requires improvements. Furthermore, Valery

Bganba, Speaker of the Parliament, said that lawmakers' reaction to the draft was "close to negative" as many of its clauses "are about losing sovereignty." Bganba said that the already existing comprehensive treaty on cooperation with Russia, which was signed in 2008 after Moscow recognised Georgia's breakaway regions as "independent states," already provides for all the necessary conditions for close ties. However, Bganba added that: "The comprehensive treaty needed to be filled with substance and then all of the issues would have been solved. In its current form, [the draft] is unacceptable." Bganba added that the parliament will have many remarks to all of the sections of the draft, except for its preamble, and will lay out its proposals within a week or two as requested by the Abkhazian leader.<sup>11</sup> Among the complaints over the proposed draft, Bganba listed the proposal to allow Russia to appoint the commander of the Joint Group of Troops (Forces) in wartime or in the case when there is the direct threat of aggression. He also criticised the proposal on the joint control of the movement of people, vehicles and cargo not only on the Russia-Abkhazian border but also at seaports in Abkhazia. He said that *cargo entering into Abkhazia and not going into Russia should not become the subject of control from Russian customs authorities* [author's italics]. Bganba further noted that: "Even though we all understand that integration with Russia is necessary and we understand that Russia is our strategic ally, it does not mean that we have *to lose our sovereignty* [author's italics] because of that. Therefore, we will, of course, build our policy upon strengthening friendship with the Russian Federation but, at the same time, we must maintain these relations *on an equal basis* [author's italics]. It is not about big and small states. It is about two states and, of course, they have to sign treaties as equal entities."<sup>12</sup> What is apparently clear is that Bganba does not understand that the Russian Federation does not see the Republic of Abkhazia as an equal state but rather as a subject of the Russian Federation. The Russian officials will dismiss the author's comment out of hand.

One of the issues which has also drawn controversy in Abkhazia is related to a proposal to set up the Joint Coordinating Centre. Astamur Tania, Chief of Administration of the Abkhazian de facto President, said that the clause requires "substantial clarification." He said that the Abkhazian side believes that the functions of this centre should be providing by the parties "consultative" assistance to each other and an exchange of information in the fight against cross-border crimes.<sup>13</sup> What exactly the "substantial clarification" should entail, however, remains unclear. As a result, there is no sense to speculate on clarification that remains unarticulated.

To allay any concern that Russia intends bringing Abkhazia back into its fold and mitigate any public discontent, Sergei Shamba, the former Prime

Minister of Abkhazia, said that: “We live in a democratic state and, by all odds, our public has looked at the draft treaty from a different angle. The time when Russian-Abkhazian relations must advance to a new phase has already come. The draft treaty is in need of amending but, overall, it is beneficial for Abkhazia. As for the response from the Georgian side, we have private relations with Russia and are strongly determined to always pursue our and only our interests.”<sup>14</sup> To reinforce Shamba’s statement, Khajimba in a televised address to the nation on 22 October 2014 said that Moscow does not try to “impose” its proposed **draft of the new treaty** on Abkhazia and called for a “calm working atmosphere” to develop Sokhumi’s proposals and avoid “discrediting the idea” of expanding ties with Moscow. Furthermore, to show that Abkhazia is indeed an independent state where democracy and transparency are observed by all means and not the so-called Banana Republic, Khajimba said that the ongoing public discussion in Abkhazia will lead to the development of a “balanced” text which will then be negotiated by the Abkhazian team of negotiators, composed of representatives from executive and legislative authorities, together with Russia. Khajimba firmly stated that: “Abkhazia *has no ally other than Russia* [author’s italics] and we have no right to discredit the idea of expanding and deepening our co-operation in various directions. I want to especially stress that we will carry out such co-operation solely based upon our constitution and the inviolability of sovereignty.”<sup>15</sup> In other words, Khajimba sent a clear signal to the Government of Georgia that the latter has nothing to say on the matter and as long as Khajimba remains de facto President of Abkhazia, Georgia will not be an ally of Abkhazia. Therefore, the appeal of Prime Minister Irakli Gharibashvili to “our Abkhazian brothers”<sup>16</sup> was regarded in Abkhazia as being out of touch.

On 30 October 2014, Sokhumi offered its text on the draft treaty. Like the Russian draft, the Abkhazian version also has collective defence clause and envisages creation of the Joint Group of Forces. However, it specifies that the Joint Group of Forces should be established with units from the Abkhazian Armed Forces and the Russian Armed Forces. The Abkhazian version specified that the joint forces would have separate military facilities. [This can be an expensive task and Russia is likely to refuse constructing separate military facilities since Russia pays the bill, author’s comment.]

Unlike the Russian draft, the Abkhazian draft specifies that in peacetime command of the Joint Group of Forces would be rotated between the two sides. During the direct threat of aggression and wartime, the deputy commander of the Joint Group of Forces would be appointed by Sokhumi. The Abkhazian side specified that the decision to use the joint forces would be a joint decision between the Russian and the Abkhazian presidents. The

Abkhazian draft calling for the equipping of the Abkhazian armed forces with modern weaponry. [Whether or not Russia will provide weapons at discount price or free of charge remain not known, author's comment.] The Abkhazian draft also calling for training of the armed forces of Abkhazia by taking into account the newest forms and methods of waging war including by means of carrying out joint command-staff and operational tactical exercises. The Abkhaz draft sets six months deadline for signing the separate agreement.

The Russian draft treaty on organisation of joint control was criticised in Sokhumi and, as a result, was removed from the text.<sup>17</sup> According to the Abkhazian final draft, Moscow and Sokhumi would jointly provide engineering and technical equipping of the Abkhazian-Georgian border in the next two years.<sup>18</sup>

According to Zurab Papaskiri, even though Abkhazian parliamentarians recently suggested renaming the agreement on alliance and integration into an agreement on alliance and strategic partnership with the Russian Federation, Russia will not allow changes to the *core* [author's italics] of the agreement.<sup>19</sup> Despite the Abkhazian officials brave reaction toward the Russian draft he who pays the piper, calls the tune. In other words, Russia is the one who set the rules for Abkhazia to follow and oblige. As Abkhazian commentator, Aslan Basaria, forecast: "What will remain of our country's independence will be the name – the Republic of Abkhazia."<sup>20</sup>

## Georgian Reaction

Back on 24 August 2014, the Government of Georgia did not respond to Khajimba's initiative since it decided to pursue a policy of wait-and-see. Whether or not it was a mistake is hard to say since back then, as well as today, the Government of Georgia has very few levers to influence both the Abkhazian and Russian governments. Still, on 15 October 2014, the Georgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in a separate statement **condemned** the Moscow-proposed draft of the agreement as a "step towards the annexation" of Abkhazia.<sup>21</sup> The same day, President Giorgi Margvelashvili asked the Parliament to "promptly discuss" and "elaborate position" on the **Russia-proposed treaty with Abkhazia** which, he said, if signed will "cause the military-political situation to deteriorate" and pose a security threat to the entire region. Margvelashvili also said that: "This treaty is yet another step against Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity. It comes in conflict with the spirit of the Geneva [international] discussions. This treaty poses a direct threat to our country's defence."

Margvelashvili added that: “I appeal to the international community, our friendly countries, to promptly and adequately assess the situation and react appropriately to this yet further step against our sovereignty and territorial integrity.” The Georgian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Maia Panjikidze, said on 15 October 2014 that the draft treaty would be “a real annexation” of Abkhazia by Russia if it is signed. [In other words, as long as the treaty is not signed Abkhazia is not “really annexed” by Russia, author’s comment.]

Panjikidze also expressed hope [based upon what premise, author’s comment] that this treaty will not be signed. Echoing an earlier written **statement** by the Georgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Panjikidze also said that: “If the treaty is signed, it will “seriously damage” the Geneva talks as well as the direct talks between Tbilisi and Moscow conducted in the framework of the Zurab Abashidze-Grigory Karasin format. And, of course, it will be a serious detrimental action for the security and stability in the region.”<sup>22</sup> After meeting Grigory Karasin, the Russian Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, in Prague on 16 October 2014, Zurab Abashidze, the Georgian Prime Minister Special Envoy for Relations with Russia, told journalists that he and his Russian interlocutor have “radically different” views on Moscow’s planned new treaty with Sokhumi. Abashidze said that: “I have explained to Karasin the risks and the complications that the signing of this treaty will create for our dialogue. The draft treaty will be assessed by us as a step towards the annexation of Abkhazia with subsequent legal consequences if this treaty is signed. I have also explained to him that we will try maximally to engage the international community in this process.”<sup>23</sup>

What Tbilisi can do to prevent the treaty [signature and implementation, author’s insertion] remains, however, relatively limited.<sup>24</sup> Russia will do whatever it wishes and Georgia will accept the consequences. For the Russian reaction, see below. Therefore, such folly statements by Irakli Alasania, Minister of Defence, and Maia Panjikidze, Minister of Foreign Affairs, that Tbilisi will counter Russia’s Abkhazian moves with “very aggressive – meaning active” and/or “pro-active” foreign policy<sup>25</sup> leaves more questions than answers. Namely, what exactly does the proposed pro-active foreign policy entail? If it implies an appeal to the international community, then it can be said loud and clear that the international community has other priorities. As a result, an appeal from Georgia will fall upon deaf ears in the European Union and the United States. We also need to remember that the international community tends to react to the Russian initiatives too late when it basically faces a *fait accompli* situation. On the other hand, the Government of Russia is not impressed by the noise originating from Tbilisi. It is certainly listening to it but dismisses it outright. Furthermore, it

is not the first time that Russia behaves with impunity vis-à-vis Georgia and the international community reacts rather mutely, to say the least.

Interestingly enough, *Kommersant* online reported that the Government of Georgia announced that it will publish action plans to counter Russia's Abkhazian moves on 20 October 2014.<sup>26</sup> According to Mindia Janelidze, the Secretary of the Security and Crisis Management Council, the Prime Minister issued instructions to all agencies to present action plans in the coming days.<sup>27</sup> Thus far, no action plans have been published and it remains to be seen if and when such plans will be published.

The annexation of Abkhazia by Russia is a clear signal to Georgia of what may yet come. Georgia is isolated and has no choice but to accept the Russian dictat. Russian loud and clear statements articulated below indicate that Moscow is not ready to tolerate the interference of Georgian officials. And anyway, Russia will do whatever it wishes and scorn the reaction of the international community.

## Russian Reaction

On 16 October 2014, the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs released its statement saying that: "Nobody has the right or the ability either to prevent Moscow or Sokhumi from bringing their ties to a new level." The Ministry also slammed Georgia's reaction to the **Moscow-proposed new treaty with Abkhazia** which Tbilisi **condemned** as "a step towards the annexation" of its breakaway region. Grigory Karasin, Russian Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, said that "Moscow will pursue its intention to have a new treaty with Abkhazia"<sup>28</sup> with or without any regard to Georgia's reaction. Furthermore, Karasin said that: "Georgia's assumption about an alleged "annexation" of Abkhazia is an unscrupulous and dangerous speculation which can seriously mar the atmosphere of the Geneva discussions." Karasin expressed hope that the EU and other co-chairs of the discussion will make effort to prevent such a development.<sup>29</sup> Nevertheless, Karasin's unwavering remarks failed to note that the Abkhazian authorities themselves – regardless of what the Georgian leadership thinks or wants – are also not happy with the prospect of giving up their statehood by signing a draft treaty that essentially lays the groundwork for Abkhazia's accession into Russia.<sup>30</sup> For the recent reaction from Abkhazia, see notes 19 and 20.

Moscow also requested that Tbilisi not get involved in the issue. The Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated that: "Abkhazia is entitled to pursue an independent foreign policy. It has a right to finalise an agreement with any country. The West must respect Abkhazia's right to be a sovereign state. They call upon everyone to respect each and every state's sovereign-

ty, do they not?" Alexander Lukashevich, Ministry Spokesman expressed his hope that the Abkhazian-Russian draft treaty "will not have a negative impact upon the normalisation of Russian-Georgian relations."<sup>31</sup> The decision to suspend the Karasin-Abashidze dialogue perhaps crossed the mind of Georgian officials but they decided against it. It can be said that Moscow counted upon the meek reaction of Georgian officials who basically have no means to back up their words.

To conclude, the further entrenching of the Russian military along the unrecognised Abkhazian-Georgian border is a clear signal to the Government of Georgia that after annexing Abkhazia Georgia remains very much on the mind of President Vladimir Putin and his administration. Moscow can decide at any suitable time for Moscow to complete the unfinished business by bringing Georgia back into its fold. The Government of Georgia's meek and muted reaction is not at all surprising since it has very little concrete to offer to counter Russian moves in Abkhazia. Gharibashvili's appeal as was stated above was rejected out of hand. Karasin's stern reaction towards the Government of Georgia shows that Moscow is not willing to tolerate any impertinence coming from Georgia. As for the reaction of the international community, the lesser it says the better it is for Georgia since Putin and his administration are no longer paying **any** attention to the reaction from the international community.

## References

1. "What Will Abkhazia's New, De-Facto Leader Write On a "New Page" with Russia?" in *Eurasianet.org* online at: [www.eurasianet.org/node/69686](http://www.eurasianet.org/node/69686) - online on 25 August 2014. Vasili Rukhadze was slightly puzzled what exactly "a new level of integration" might even look like since as Rukhadze wrote *every aspect* [author's italics] of occupied Abkhazia's socio-economic and political life (not to mention the military) is under tight Russian control. Apparently, it is not good enough for Moscow. Khajimba's ascent to power sent a clear signal to Russia that Russia was given a green light to further tighten its grip over Abkhazia. For the complete article, see "New Pro-Russian, Radical Separatist Leader Takes Power in Breakaway Abkhazia" in *The Jamestown Foundation, Eurasia Daily Monitor*, vol. 11, issue 153 online at: [www.jamestown.org/programs/edm/single/?tx\\_ttnews%5Btt\\_news%5D=42779&tx\\_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=756&no\\_cache=1#.VEDzViKUd24](http://www.jamestown.org/programs/edm/single/?tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=42779&tx_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=756&no_cache=1#.VEDzViKUd24) – online on 3 September 2014.
2. Joshua Kucera, "Russia, Abkhazia Discuss Forming "Unified Defense Space"" in *Eurasianet.org* online at: [www.eurasianet.org/node/69746](http://www.eurasianet.org/node/69746) - online on 28 August 2014. For a potential Russian, Abkhazian and South Ossetian "unified defence space" and reaction from the Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO), see *Idem*; "Russia, Abkhazia, South Ossetia to Form Yet Another Anti-NATO" in *Eurasianet.org* online at: [www.eurasianet.org/node/69801](http://www.eurasianet.org/node/69801) - online on 2 September 2014. Hereafter cited as Joshua Kucera, "Russia, Abkhazia."
3. Joshua Kucera, "Russia, Abkhazia."
4. [www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=27712](http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=27712) – online on 12 October 2014. The so-called "military-patriotic" education smacks of the theme widely used in the former Soviet Union.
5. For the complete article, see online at: [www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=27714](http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=27714) – online on 13 October 2014.
6. For the complete list of articles, see online at: [www.ABK\\_RF\\_Treaty\\_alliance\\_integration\\_10\\_2014.docx](http://www.ABK_RF_Treaty_alliance_integration_10_2014.docx). Pages are not numbered. See also online at: [www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=27714](http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=27714) – online on 13 October 2014. For a very good and insightful analysis of the draft treaty and its implications for Abkhazia, see Arda Inal-Ila, "Moskovskii Proekt Dogovora Sukhum ne Ustroil" (Arda Inal-Ila, "The Moscow Projekt of Treaty Is Not Accepted by Sokhumi") online at: [www.ng.ru/courier/2011-11-17/9\\_suhum.html](http://www.ng.ru/courier/2011-11-17/9_suhum.html).



7. [www.ABK\\_RF\\_Treaty\\_alliance\\_integration\\_10\\_2014.docx](#).
8. For the complete article, see [www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=27841](#) – online on 22 November 2014.
9. In support of the author’s comment, see Giorgi Lomsadze, “Russia Closes Door on Abkhazia For Olympics” in *Eurasianet.org* online at: [www.eurasianet.org/print/67742](#) - online on 8 November 2013; Joshua Kucera, “Sochi Olympics “Security Zone” Extended Into Abkhazia” in *Eurasianet.org* online at: [www.eurasianet.org/print/67956](#) - online on 20 January 2014.
10. [www.ABK\\_RF\\_Treaty\\_alliance\\_integration\\_10\\_2014.docx](#).
11. For the complete article, see online at: [www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=27718](#) – online on 15 October 2014. In addition to concerns over “losing sovereignty” the Russian-proposed draft has also been **criticised** in Abkhazia which also **wants** to upgrade its ties with Moscow. For the complete article, see online at: [www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=27722](#) – online on 16 October 2014. Joshua Kucera in his article (“Russia to Pocket” Abkhazia?” in *Eurasianet.org*) calls the “loss of sovereignty” as the cause for self-preservation worries. For the complete article, see online at: [www.eurasianet.org/print/70481](#) - online on 16 October 2014. Hereafter cited Joshua Kucera, “Russia to Pocket.” Kucera’s title can be rephrased into “Russia (Pick)pocketing Abkhazia.” For the notion of “about loss of sovereignty”, see online at: [www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=27724](#) – online on 17 October 2014. In an interesting but rather incorrect article of Zaza Jgharkava (“Tbilisi and Sokhumi Contest Russia’s Abkhazia Plans”) Jgharkava writes that In Tbilisi and Sokhumi perceptions of territorial integrity are different. However, the fact that former enemies perceive the Kremlin as an aggressor... in *Georgia Today*, issue 737 online at: [www.georgiatoday.ge/print\\_version.php?id=12760&version=737](#) – online on 17-23 October 2014. Abkhazian politicians despite their concern over the loss of sovereignty did not say either explicitly or implicitly that they perceive the Kremlin as an aggressor. Contrary to that, Bganba said that: “We understand that Russia is our strategic ally,” (for the complete article, see online at: [www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=27718](#) – online on 15 October 2014) while Khajimba went even further by saying that: “Abkhazia has no ally other than Russia.” [www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=27738](#) – online on 23 October 2014. Khajimba further said that: “Only Russia supported us when we had a hard time” (for the complete article, see [www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=27843](#) – online on 23 November 2014) and that is something that the Abkhazian population should remember.
12. For the complete article, see online at: [www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=27718](#) – online on 15 October 2014.

13. For the complete article, see online at: [www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=27718](http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=27718) – online on 15 October 2014. Important note: many of the statements in the article relate to “substantial” improvements. However, what exactly these “substantial” improvements should be were not spelled out. The same rather unspecified refinement and perfection phrases were mentioned in the Abkhazian Council of Elders’ statement “We do approve the public’s move to voice concerns over the future treaty and we do strongly hold that the project needs refinement and perfection.” For the complete statement, see online at: [www.geotimes.ge/en/index.php/en/2014-05-06-22-54-27/item/1238-abkhaz-council-of-elders-fears-that-abkhazia-might-lose-its-sovereignty](http://www.geotimes.ge/en/index.php/en/2014-05-06-22-54-27/item/1238-abkhaz-council-of-elders-fears-that-abkhazia-might-lose-its-sovereignty) - online on 22 October 2014. For concerns over the future treaty and opposition holding the rally against signing of the treaty in Sokhumi, see [www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=27843](http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=27843) – online on 23 November 2014.
14. For the complete article, see online at: [www.kommersant.ru/doc/2593160](http://www.kommersant.ru/doc/2593160) - online on 17 October 2014.
15. For the complete article, see online at: [www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=27738](http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=27738) – online on 23 October 2014. A “balanced text” that was mentioned by Khajimba was not negotiated together with Russia but rather presented to Russia in its revised version.
16. For the complete article, see online at: [www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=27745](http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=27745) – online on 27 October 2014. See also Giorgi Lomsadze, “South Ossetia to Russia: Go Ahead, Crimea Me!” in *Eurasianet.org* online at: [www.eurasianet.org/node/70651](http://www.eurasianet.org/node/70651) - online on 29 October 2014. Hereafter cited as Giorgi Lomsadze, “South Ossetia to Russia.”
17. For the complete article, see [www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=27768](http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=27768) – online on 3 November 2014. The text published by *civil.ge* online was augmented by Joshua Kucera’s article “The Russian Proposal on Integration, Abkhazia Says “Not So Fast”” in *Eurasianet.org* online at: [www.eurasianet.org/print/70746](http://www.eurasianet.org/print/70746) - online on 3 November 2014.
18. For the complete article, see [www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=27841](http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=27841) – online on 22 November 2014.
19. For the complete article, see [www.abkhazeti.info/abkhazia/2014/1414605007.php](http://www.abkhazeti.info/abkhazia/2014/1414605007.php) - online on 29 October 2014.
20. For the complete article, see Liz Fuller, “De Facto Abkhaz Leader Risks Being Hoist by His Own Petard” in *Caucasus Report* online at: [www.rferl.org/content/caucasus-report-abkhazia-khajimba/26657750.html](http://www.rferl.org/content/caucasus-report-abkhazia-khajimba/26657750.html) - online on 26 October 2014.

21. For the complete article, see online at: [www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=27719](http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=27719) – online on 15 October 2014. On 17 October, the Georgian Parliament adopted a statement with 80 votes which “condemns” Russia’s “attempt to annex occupied Abkhazia.” For the complete article, see online at: [www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=27726](http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=27726) – online on 18 October 2014. See also [www.geotimes.ge/en/index.php/en/2014-05-06-22-53-57/item/1415-tbilisi-condemns-revised-draft-russia-abkhazia-treaty](http://www.geotimes.ge/en/index.php/en/2014-05-06-22-53-57/item/1415-tbilisi-condemns-revised-draft-russia-abkhazia-treaty) - online on 21 November 2014.
22. For the complete article, see online at: [www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=27720](http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=27720) – online on 15 October 2014. As for the meaningless saying of Prime Minister Irakli Gharibashvili on the Moscow-proposed treaty with Abkhazia, see online at: [www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=27723](http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=27723) – online on 17 October 2014.
23. For the complete article, see online at: [www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=27722](http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=27722) – online on 16 October 2014. Georgian Dream (GD) lawmaker from the Republican Party, Tina Khidasheli, said that: “The only tool at our disposal is not how loudly we will speak and insult someone, but to act hand in hand and in unison with the international community.” For the complete article, see online at: [www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=27726](http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=27726) – online on 18 October 2014. See also [www.geotimes.ge/en/index.php/en/2014-05-06-22-53-57/item/1415-tbilisi-condemns-revised-draft-russia-abkhazia-treaty](http://www.geotimes.ge/en/index.php/en/2014-05-06-22-53-57/item/1415-tbilisi-condemns-revised-draft-russia-abkhazia-treaty) - online on 21 November 2014.
24. Joshua Kucera, “Russia to Pocket.”
25. For the complete article, see online at: [www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=27729](http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=27729) – online on 19 October 2014. See also Yuri Roks, “Tbilisi Perekhodit k Agresivnoi Diplomatii v Otnoshenii Moskvyy” (Yuri Roks, “Tbilisi Moves toward Aggressive Diplomacy Versus Moscow”) online at: [www.ng.ru/cis/2014-10-21/6\\_georgia.html](http://www.ng.ru/cis/2014-10-21/6_georgia.html). See also online at: [www.vedomosti.ru/politics/news/35054751/gruziya-zapodozrila-anneksiyu-abkhazii](http://www.vedomosti.ru/politics/news/35054751/gruziya-zapodozrila-anneksiyu-abkhazii) - online on 22 October 2014.
26. *Kommersant* 20 October 2014 issue online besides the first paragraph written in bold script repeat text published in *Kommersant* online on 17 October 2014. For the latter, see note 31. For the former, see online at: [www.kommersant.ru/doc/2593615](http://www.kommersant.ru/doc/2593615) - online on 20 October 2014.
27. [www.interpressnews.ge/en/politicss/62940-all-available-mechanisms-will-be-used-for-protection-of-georgias-sovereignty-mindia-janelidze.html?ar=A](http://www.interpressnews.ge/en/politicss/62940-all-available-mechanisms-will-be-used-for-protection-of-georgias-sovereignty-mindia-janelidze.html?ar=A) – online on 18 October 2014. See also Giorgi Lomsadze, “South Ossetia to Russia.”
28. For the complete article, see online at: [www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=27722](http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=27722) – online on 16 October 2014.

29. For the complete article, see online at: [www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=27731](http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=27731) – online on 21 October 2014. See also [www.vedomosti.ru/politics/news/35054751/gruziya-zapodozrila-anneksiyu-abkhazii](http://www.vedomosti.ru/politics/news/35054751/gruziya-zapodozrila-anneksiyu-abkhazii) - online on 22 October 2014.
30. For the complete article, see Giorgi Menabde, “Russia Issues Ultimatum to Abkhazia” in *The Jamestown Foundation, Eurasia Daily Monitor*, vol. 11, issue 188 online at: [www.jamestown.org/programs/edm/single/?tx\\_ttnews%5Btt\\_news%5D=42989&tx\\_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=756&no\\_cache=1#.VE46vi-KUd24](http://www.jamestown.org/programs/edm/single/?tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=42989&tx_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=756&no_cache=1#.VE46vi-KUd24) – on 23 October 2014.
31. For the complete article, see online at: [www.kommersant.ru/doc/2593160](http://www.kommersant.ru/doc/2593160) - online on 17 October 2014.