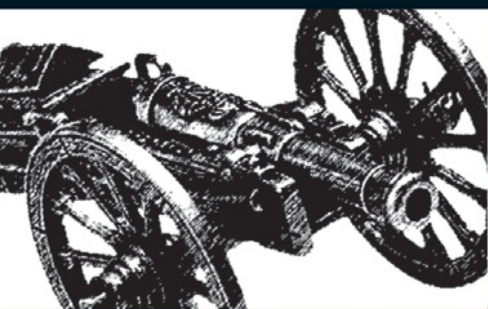


THE GUNS OF AUGUST 2008 RUSSIA'S WAR IN GEORGIA



SVANTE E. CORNELL & S. FREDERICK STARR
EDITORS

The Guns of August 2008

Russia's War in Georgia

Edited by Svante E. Cornell and S. Frederick Starr

Wars always give rise to a flood of self-justifications by the contending states and tendentious claims from other interested parties. The brief war between Russia and Georgia in August 2008 is no exception. Absent from all the polemics has been authoritative information on the actual course of events. This pioneering study by ten highly regarded experts traces the roots of the conflict back more than a decade. It details the intense preparations that preceded the war, the key moments of the fighting itself, and the broader consequences of the conflict to date.

This goes far toward establishing “what actually happened,” which is precisely what the nineteenth-century German historian Leopold von Ranke considered the starting point for true understanding.

Studies of Central Asia and the Caucasus

Books in this series are published in association with the Central Asia–Caucasus Institute of the Johns Hopkins University’s Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies, under the editorship of S. Frederick Starr.

THE GUNS OF AUGUST 2008 RUSSIA'S WAR IN GEORGIA

SVANTE E. CORNELL & S. FREDERICK STARR
EDITORS

 **Routledge**
Taylor & Francis Group
LONDON AND NEW YORK

First published 2009 by M.E. Sharpe

Published 2015 by Routledge
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN
711 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017, USA

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

Copyright © 2009 Taylor & Francis. All rights reserved.

No part of this book may be reprinted or reproduced or utilised in any form or by any electronic, mechanical, or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publishers.

Notices

No responsibility is assumed by the publisher for any injury and/or damage to persons or property as a matter of products liability, negligence or otherwise, or from any use or operation of any methods, products, instructions or ideas contained in the material herein.

Practitioners and researchers must always rely on their own experience and knowledge in evaluating and using any information, methods, compounds, or experiments described herein. In using such information or methods they should be mindful of their own safety and the safety of others, including parties for whom they have a professional responsibility.

Product or corporate names may be trademarks or registered trademarks, and are used only for identification and explanation without intent to infringe.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

The guns of August 2008 : Russia's war in Georgia / edited by Svante E. Cornell and S. Frederick Starr.

p. cm. — (Studies of Central Asia and the Caucasus)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-0-7656-2507-6 (cloth : alk. paper) — ISBN 978-0-7656-2508-3 (pbk. : alk. paper)

1. Georgia (Republic)—Military relations—Russia (Federation) 2. Russia (Federation)—Military relations—Georgia (Republic) 3. Georgia (Republic)—Foreign relations—Russia (Federation) 4. Russia (Federation)—Foreign relations—Georgia (Republic) 5. South Ossetia (Georgia)—History, Military—21st century. 6. Abkhazia (Georgia)—History, Military—21st century. 7. Transcaucasia—History, Military—21st century. 8. Russia (Federation)—Foreign relations—1991– 9. Russia (Federation)—Military policy. 10. National security—Europe—Case studies. I. Cornell, Svante E. II. Starr, S. Frederick.

DK676.9.R8G86 2009
947.5808'62—dc22

2009019849

ISBN 13: 9780765625083 (pbk)
ISBN 13: 9780765625076 (hbk)

Contents

List of Tables and Illustrative Materials	vii
List of Acronyms	viii
Acknowledgements	xiv
1. Introduction <i>Svante E. Cornell and S. Frederick Starr</i>	3
2. The Paradox of Living in Paradise: Georgia's Descent into Chaos <i>Thomas Goltz</i>	10
3. Georgian-Russian Relations in the 1990s <i>Thornike Gordadze</i>	28
4. The Russian Leadership's Preparation for War, 1999–2008 <i>Andrei Illarionov</i>	49
5. Georgia's Rose Revolution: The Break with the Past <i>Niklas Nilsson</i>	85
6. From Neglect to Duress: The West and the Georgian Crisis Before the 2008 War <i>Stephen Blank</i>	104
7. The Saakashvili Administration's Reaction to Russian Policies Before the 2008 War <i>David J. Smith</i>	122
8. From Sukhumi to Tskhinvali: The Path to War in Georgia <i>Johanna Popjanevski</i>	143
9. After August 7: The Escalation of the Russia-Georgia War <i>Pavel Felgenhauer</i>	162
10. Defining Victory and Defeat: The Information War Between Russia and Georgia <i>Paul A. Goble</i>	181
11. The Implications of the Russia-Georgia War for European Security <i>James Sherr</i>	196

Notes	225
Contributors	267
Index	273

List of Tables and Illustrative Materials

Maps

Map of Georgia	ix
JPKF map of Georgian-controlled areas in South Ossetia	x

Leaflets

Kavkaz-2008 leaflet (in Russian)	xi
Kavkaz-2008 leaflet (English translation)	xii

Tables

4.1 Who was first?	77
--------------------	----

Boxes

4.1 Russian Citizens in the Military and Political Leadership of South Ossetia, 2004–08	81
4.2 Tskhinvali Pool of Russian Journalists	83

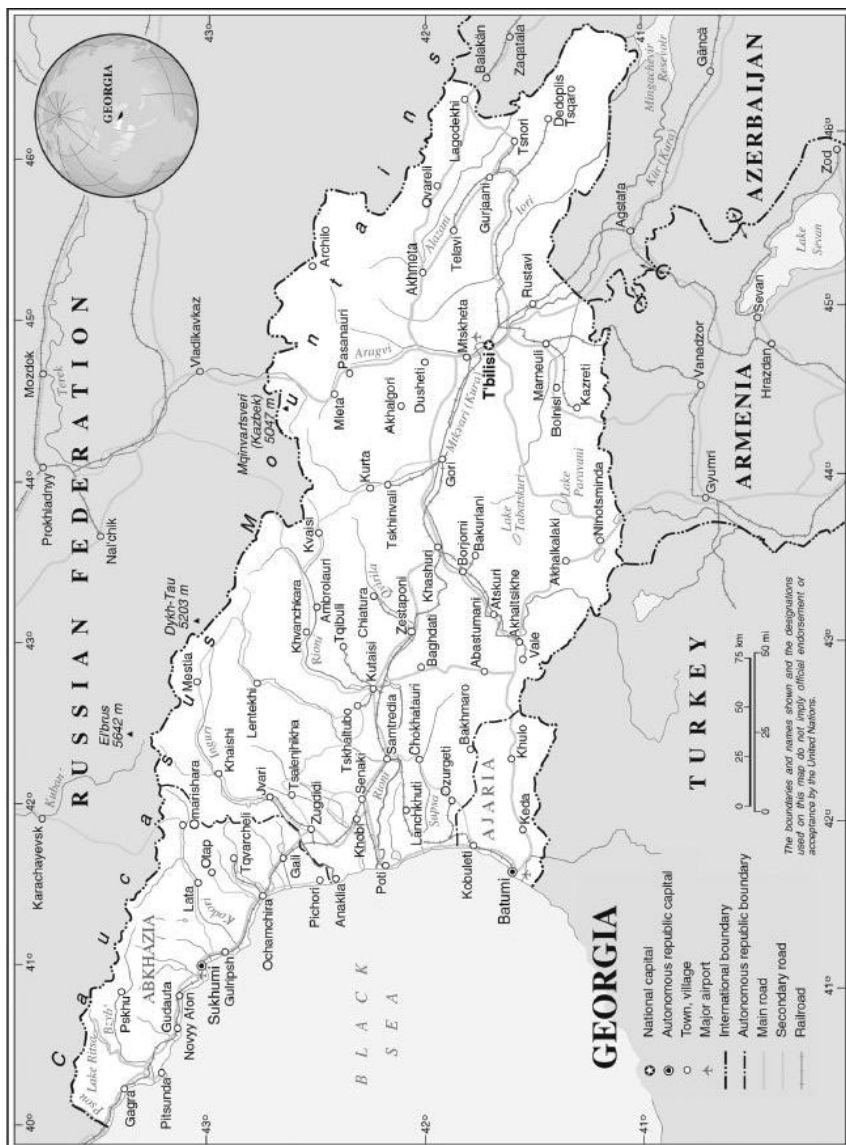
Photographs

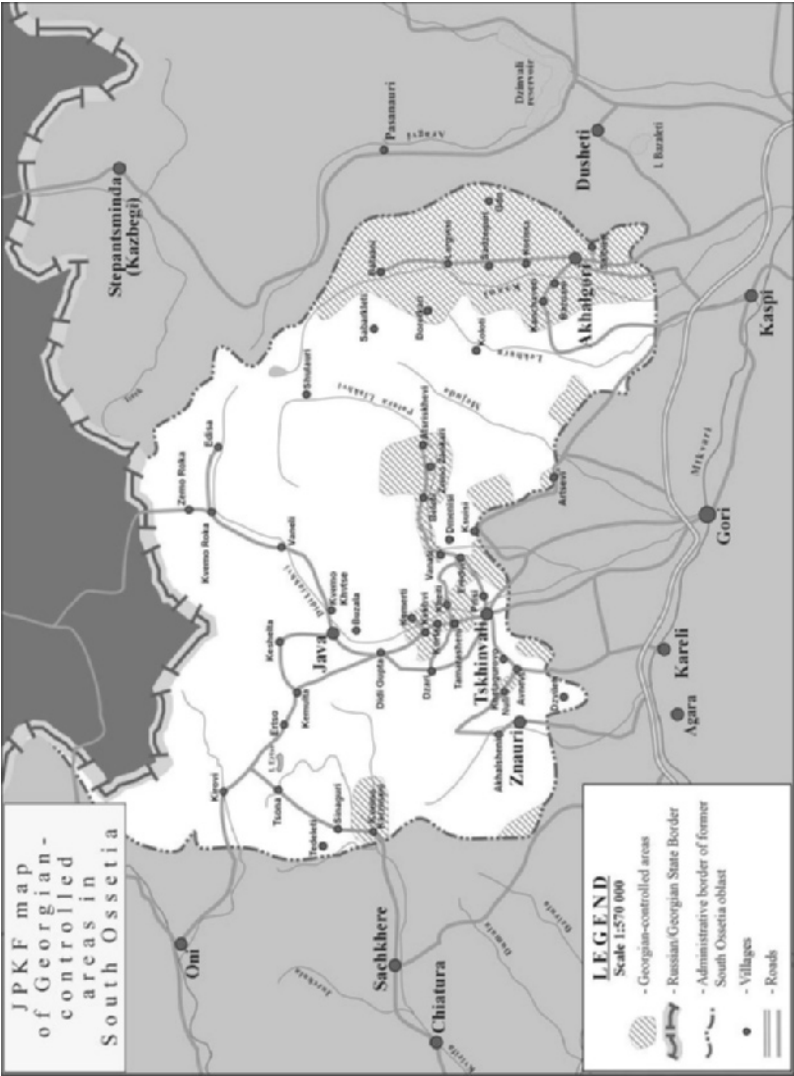
Photographs follow page xiv.

Photographs by Interpressnews (IPN)

List of Acronyms

BTC	Baku–Tbilisi–Ceyhan pipeline
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CUG	Citizens’ Union of Georgia
EU	European Union
FSB	Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation
GAF	Georgian Armed Forces
GRU	Foreign Military Intelligence Directorate of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation
GTEP	Georgia Train and Equip Program
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IMF	International Monetary Fund
ISFED	International Society for Fair Elections and Democracy
JCC	Joint Control Commission
MAP	Membership Action Plan
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NCMD	North Caucasus Military District
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
ODIHR	Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PfP	Partnership for Peace
RFE/RL	Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty
SSR	Soviet Socialist Republic
UAV	Unmanned Aerial Vehicle
UNOMIG	United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia
ZAKVO	Russian Transcaucasian Military District





Joint Peace-Keeping Force map (International Crisis Group)

Leaflet distributed to Russian forces during Kavkaz-2008 military exercises in the North Caucasus, July 2008 (in Russian).

ВОИН, ЗНАЙ ВЕРОЯТНОГО ПРОТИВНИКА!

С 2001 года руководство Грузии резко изменило свой курс на добрососедские и дружественные отношения с Россией. Избран направление на эскалацию отношений с нашим государством, руководство Грузии всяческими путями стремится вступить в состав НАТО, активно проводит милитаризацию страны.

Состав ВС Грузии: сухопутные войска, военно-воздушные силы и ПВО, военно-морские силы, национальная гвардия.

Численность ВС Грузии — 32 700 чел.

Бюджет министерства обороны на 2008 год — \$970 млн.

Сухопутные войска

Численность 22 000 чел.

Сухопутные войска Грузии включают 5 бригад и 8 отд. батальонов

-1-я пехотная бригада (г. Гори). В 2002-2004гг. прошла обучение по американской программе GTER, в 2005-2006гг. - частично по американской программе GSSOP.

-2-я пехотная бригада (н.п. Сенаки и г. Батуми). В 2005г. прошла обучение по американской программе GSSOP, в 2005-2006гг. прошла «обкатку» в Ираке.

-3-я пехотная бригада (г. Кутаиси и н.п. Ахалцихе). В 2006г. прошла обучение по американской программе GSSOP II, в 2006-2008гг. прошла «обкатку» в Ираке, 32-й батальон в 2007г. был в Косово.

-4-я пехотная бригада (г. Тбилиси и н.п. Мухровани). Сформирована из военнослужащих бывших внутренних войск.

-5-я пехотная бригада (г. Батуми и г. Потн).

На вооружении грузинской армии состоит:

танки: Т-72Б1, Т-72М Т-72АВ (по планам министерства обороны Грузии все 165 единиц Т-72 проходят модернизацию до уровня Т-72-SIM-1).

БМП: БМП-1, БМП-2, БТР-80, МТЛБ, БРДМ-2, броневые автомобили Кобра.

Ствольная артиллерия: 203-мм 2С7 САУ "Пион", 152-мм 2С19 САУ Мста-С, 152-мм буксируемая гаубица 2А65 Мста-Б, 152-мм 2А36 буксируемая пушка Гиацинт-Б, 152-мм САУ DANA, 122-мм 2С3 САУ Акация, 22-мм буксируемая гаубица 2А18 Д-30, 100-мм буксируемая пушка МТ-12, 40 85-мм буксируемая пушка Д-44.

РСЗО: 262-мм М-87 РСЗО "Оркан", 122-мм-160-мм РСЗО Лар-160 "Град-лар", 122-мм РСЗО RM-70, 122-мм РСЗО БМ-21 Град, 128-мм М63 РСЗО "Пламен".

26 января 2008 года Грузия объявила об отказе от автоматов Калашникова в пользу автоматических винтовок М-4 американского производства.

Сильные стороны:

- подготовка многих подразделений сухопутных войск Грузии инструкторами НАТО;
- оснащение ВС Грузии современным американским, французским и турецким вооружением и техникой. Имеющиеся образцы вооружения и техники советского образца усовершенствуются или заменяются новейшими;
- финансирование подготовки войск США и НАТО;
- наличие боевого опыта подразделений 2-й и 3-й полевых бригад в Ираке, Косово в составе войск НАТО.

Слабые стороны:

- низкое состояние воинской дисциплины и морально-психологическое состояние военнослужащих. Имеются случаи дезертирства, проявления неуставных взаимоотношений, пьянства в подразделениях сухопутных войск;

- как показали опубликованные недавно опросы военнослужащих ВС Грузии, самой большой и светлой мечтой грузинского солдата является не претворение в жизнь агрессивно-милитаристских планов "саакашвили", а командировка в Ирак. По итогам такой поездки каждый грузинский воин может привезти домой около 10 тысяч долларов США и существенно поправить бедственное положение своей семьи;

- низкая обученность личного состава подразделений, в которых нет американских инструкторов.

Отпечатано в типографии газеты «Доблесть»

Зак. №4-08

Soldier, know your probable enemy!

Starting in 2001, the government of Georgia abruptly changed its course towards neighborly and friendly relations with Russia. Choosing to exploit relations with our country, the Georgian government is using all possible means to enter the NATO club by actively increasing militarization of the country.

Composition of Georgian Armed Forces: ground troops, air force and air defense forces, navy forces, national guard.

Number of Georgian Armed Forces – 32,700 men.

The Defense Ministry budget for 2008 – \$970 million.

Ground Troops

Size – 22,000 men.

The Armed Forces include five brigades and eight separate battalions.

1st infantry brigade (Gori city). In 2002–2004 underwent training based on American Georgia Train and Equip Program (GTEP). In 2005–2006 – partially [underwent] American Georgia Sustainment and Stability Operation Program (GSSOP).

2nd infantry brigade (Senaki town and Batumi city). In 2005 underwent training based on American GSSOP; 2005–2006 underwent “operation test” in Iraq.

3rd infantry brigade (Kutaisi city and Ahaltshi town). In 2006 underwent training based on American GSSOP II; in 2006–2008 underwent “operation test” in Iraq; in 2007, was [part of] a special battalion in Kosovo.

4th infantry brigade (Tbilisi city and Muhrovani town). Composed of armed personnel formerly serving at the Interior Ministry.

5th infantry brigade (Batumi city and Poti town).

The Georgian Army forces include [the following armaments]:

Tanks: T-72B1, T-72M, T-72AB (according to plans of the Georgian Defense Ministry, all of 165 units of T-72 tanks are currently being upgraded to T-72-SIM-1).

Armored personnel carriers: APC-1, APC-2, APC-80, MT-LB multipurpose tracked vehicles, BRDM-2, armored car Cobra.

Bombardment artillery: 203 mm 2S7 “Pion” self-propelled artillery gun, 152 mm 2S19 MSTA-S self-propelled howitzer, 152 mm 2A65 Msta-B howitzer, 152 mm 2A36 “Giatsint-B” artillery gun, 152 mm ShKH Dana vz.77, 152-mm self-propelled howitzer 2S3 “Akatsiya,” 22-mm howitzer 2A18 (D-30), 40 85-mm divisional gun D-44.

Multiple artillery rocket system: 262 mm M-87 “Orkan” MLRS, GRADLAR 122mm/160 mm, 122 mm RM-70, 122 mm Multiple Rocket Launcher BM-22 “Grad,” 128 mm M-63 artillery rocket “Plamen.”

On January 26, 2008 Georgia announced its refusal to purchase “Kalashnikov” machine guns in favor of M-4 machine guns produced by America.

Strengths:

- training of most of Georgian ground troops by NATO instructors; equipment of Georgian Armed Forces by modern American, French, and Turkish armament and technologies. Current armament and technologies of the Soviet production are being modernized or replaced by new units;
- training of troops is financed by the United States and NATO;
- combat experience of the 2nd and 3rd infantry brigades in Iraq and Kosovo as part of NATO forces.

Weaknesses:

- low level of discipline, military morale, and integrity among military personnel. Cases of desertion, hazing, and alcoholism are present across ground troops divisions;
- as recently published survey results of Georgian Armed Forces personnel show, the biggest and the brightest dream of a Georgian soldier is not execution of militaristic and aggressive plans of *saakashists*, but deployment to Iraq. After such a trip [to Iraq], every Georgian soldier is able to bring back home up to \$10,000 and substantially improve his family's dire situation;
- low level of education among staff divisions that do not include NATO instructors.

Published by *Doblest*' newspaper's printing house.

Translated from Russian by Erica Marat.

Acknowledgments

This book is the product of an active collaboration among many persons. First, of course, comes the team of authors, who interrupted their busy schedules to produce chapters for the book. They performed like an orchestra of old pros who produce fine concerts with scarcely a rehearsal. We feel honored to have worked with such rigorous and principled colleagues. Scarcely less crucial to the project was the staff of the Joint Center, all of whom worked into the night to bring the book to fruition. Our particular thanks go to Mr. Alec Forss, the publications editor at the Joint Center's Stockholm office, as well as to two interns who ably assisted him, Mr. Andreas Mälarstedt and Ms. Tina Kavadze. We are especially grateful to Ms. Patricia Kolb and her hard-working colleagues at M.E. Sharpe, Inc., all of whom immediately grasped the importance of the topic and guided our enthusiasms into productive channels. We should also like to express our gratitude to InterpressNews (IPN) for kindly allowing us to use their photos of the war in this book. The bold and evocative cover is the work of Ms. Anna Starr Townsend. It features the Georgian five-cross flag, which dates back to the early middle ages and was adopted as the national flag by Georgia's Parliament in 2004. The cannon is from the time of Georgia's annexation by the Russian empire in the early nineteenth century, a fitting symbol for a war which seems to have fallen into our modern world directly from an earlier age of empire and territorially-based Realpolitik.



Courtesy of InterPressNews (IPN)

In the Caucasian Hills



Courtesy of InterPressNews (IPN)

On the Outskirts of Tskhinvali



Courtesy of InterPressNews (IPN)

Broken Russian Tank Outside Gori



Courtesy of InterPressNews (IPN)

Georgian Forces on the Road Toward Tskhinvali



Courtesy of InterPressNews (IPN)

Bombed Railway Bridge at Kaspi



Courtesy of InterPressNews (IPN)

Ossetian Militias at a Checkpoint in Gori



Courtesy of InterPressNews (IPN)

Georgian Soldiers in Gredvi



Courtesy of InterPressNews (IPN)

Bombed-out Building in Gori



Courtesy of InterPressNews (IPN)

Russian Forces establishing Positions at Igoeti



Courtesy of InterPressNews (IPN)

Bombed-out Building in Gori



Courtesy of InterPressNews (IPN)

Russian Forces at Igoeti



Courtesy of InterPressNews (IPN)

A Chechen Paramilitary



Courtesy of InterPressNews (IPN)

Russian Highway Checkpoint at Igoeti



Courtesy of InterPressNews (IPN)

Russian Forces in Poti



Courtesy of InterPressNews (IPN)

President Saakashvili at a Briefing



Courtesy of InterPressNews (IPN)

Saakashvili with East European Presidents in Tbilisi, 12 August



Saakashvili with U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice in Tbilisi

Courtesy of InterPressNews (IPN)



Saakashvili with President Nicolas Sarkozy of France

Courtesy of InterPressNews (IPN)

THE
GUNS
OF AUGUST
2008

This page intentionally left blank

1

Introduction

Svante E. Cornell and S. Frederick Starr

In the summer of 2008 an unprecedented event occurred. For the first time since 1979 the Russian military crossed national borders to attack a sovereign state. This attack followed a period of intensive and mainly negative developments in Russia's relations with Georgia and, more significantly, in Russia's relations with the West. What appeared to have begun in the breakaway Georgian territory of South Ossetia rapidly escalated to the most significant crisis in European security in a decade.

This war took the world by surprise. Yet over the preceding months those closely watching events in the Caucasus had been calling attention to the escalating conflict in the region. Steps taken by the Russian leadership following the Western recognition of Kosovo's independence in February 2008, and the NATO Bucharest Summit in April brought the situation in the Caucasus to an entirely new level. In spite of a mass of readily available information on the Russian arms buildup, however, Western governments were caught off guard when simmering tensions in the Georgian conflict zones exploded into full-scale war.

Few international events of this magnitude have been so quickly submerged under a cloud of polemics involving both spin and disinformation. The media coverage of the war during the crucial first few days largely reflected Russia's line. We now know part of the reason for this, namely, that the Russian government had flown some fifty Russian reporters to Tskhinvali days before the war began. In the West, the media's opinion-dominated news cycle from the outset prevailed over more authoritative reporting. Staff cutbacks in many news media left few qualified reporters available. Even though the region is readily accessible from Europe by air, scarcely any Western news media managed to post a professional war correspondent to the scene. The few Western reporters who went to the region faced belligerents who understood the need to disseminate their view of the events, which they each did in a predictably one-sided manner.

Thanks both to Russia's information initiative and the ineffectiveness of Western news media, initial opinions that had been hastily formed on the basis of incomplete or inaccurate information soon came to dominate the airwaves and print media. Rarely, if ever, were these opinions identified as such; in most cases they were offered as fact rather than as hypotheses. This in turn led to a climate in which it was possible, even likely, that policymakers in Western governments and civic organizations could make policy on the basis of premature judgments, erroneous information or, occasionally, very little information at all.

Months after the events, analysts have focused more on the consequences of the war than on the war itself and its antecedent events. But any analysis of the August war's consequences is inevitably shaped by the narrative one accepts on the events themselves, and particularly on their deeper historical context. In order to understand the war, one must understand the evolution of Russian-Georgian relations, as well as Georgia's and Russia's respective relations with the West, over the past two decades.

Should this confrontation be understood primarily as one between Russia and Georgia, or as the tailwind of Russia's relations with the West? The link between Russia's policies in Georgia and its relationship with the West is inescapable. Russian-Georgian relations had long since soured. Georgia was moving rapidly toward Euro-Atlantic integration, and at a time when an increasingly assertive Russian foreign policy was being shaped by sphere of influence-thinking. No less important, the escalation in the Caucasus came in the immediate aftermath of Western policy decisions on Kosovo and NATO enlargement. Indeed, Russian officials during the spring of 2008 explicitly cited these decisions to justify their actions in the months before the outbreak of war.

A number of Western officials and analysts followed this process with great concern. Among them was the Joint Center led by the two editors of this volume. Over the year preceding the outbreak of war, the Central Asia-Caucasus Institute & Silk Road Studies Program issued several publications on the acrimonious Russian-Georgian relationship. In the fall of 2007 the Center published a short monograph on Russia's missile attack at the Georgian village of Tsitelubani, which occurred on August 6—a year to the day before the start of the August war. The Joint Center then proceeded to issue four more policy papers on Georgian affairs, including one of the first analytical studies on the August war, which appeared less than three weeks after the start of fighting. Given this, it was a natural step to seek to bring together more detailed information on the events leading up to the war, on the war itself, and its likely implications for the future.

This volume draws on the expertise of ten Russian, Georgian, European, and American analysts and scholars. With backgrounds in academia, journalism, military affairs, administration, and diplomacy, they bring to the task a broad and diverse knowledge of the South Caucasus, Russian foreign policy, and international relations more generally. The book traces the origins of the conflagration beginning with the process of the dissolution of the Soviet Union in the late 1980s. It then follows the relationship between Georgia, its breakaway republics of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, and Russia over the sixteen years between the establishment of Georgian independence and the war.

Some readers may ask whether it is really necessary to dwell at length on events that took place long before August 2008. Yet the contributors to this volume had all come to the independent conclusion that the events of August 2008 were the culmination of a long preparatory period that began with the dissolution of the Soviet Union, if not earlier.

The war has already been given many names: the “War Over South Ossetia,” or the “Five-Day War,” etc. Most of these are misleading to the extent that they suggest that the war was only about South Ossetia or was limited in time. Russia’s words and deeds made it clear from the outset that even though the war may have started in South Ossetia, it embraced all of Georgia, if not the South Caucasus. Contributors to this volume provide much evidence that the fighting in South Ossetia was only one theater of the broader Russian-Georgian conflict.

Even if one accepts that the war began on August 7, 2008 (though there are strong arguments to suggest it began days or even months earlier), it did not end with the cease-fire agreement signed on August 12. Russian military operations on Georgian territory continued long after that date. Even now, nearly a year later, Russia remains in violation of commitments it made in the cease-fire agreement.

This book is organized chronologically. It begins with an account of developments in Georgia during the transition to independence—a period marked by the rebirth of Georgian nationalism and a strong movement to secede from the Soviet Union. These years saw the rise and fall of Georgia’s first nationalist president, Zviad Gamsakhurdia, the return to power of Georgia’s Soviet-era leader, Eduard Shevardnadze, and the emergence of the conflicts in South Ossetia and Abkhazia. Thomas Goltz, who covered these events for leading American publications, provides a vivid picture of the chaotic time that led to Georgia’s rebirth as a state; he also gives evidence of how Russia’s interventions contributed to the overall weakening of this new Georgia as a state.

We turn then to the post-independence period dominated by the leadership of Boris Yeltsin in Russia and of Eduard Shevardnadze in Georgia. While more calm than either the preceding or subsequent periods, this era, as Thornike Gordadze shows, was more turbulent than it is generally thought to have been. On the one hand, Georgia sought to strengthen its independence. On the other, Russia worked to slow this process by intervening in its internal affairs, particularly in the conflict zones. Gordadze concludes that the rough treatment of Georgia by Yeltsin's Russia led Shevardnadze to orient Georgia increasingly toward the West, which in turn prompted a Russian reaction, which began in the last years of Yeltsin's rule but accelerated significantly after Vladimir Putin came to power in 1999.

The rise of Putin was accompanied by significant changes in Russia's attitude toward the former Soviet space. From the outset Georgia emerged as one of the Putin government's main targets. Former advisor to Vladimir Putin Andrei Illarionov, who resigned in 2005, presents a systematic overview of the measures affecting Georgia that began with Putin's ascent to power. His meticulous chronology reveals the steady march of premeditated actions that led to the escalation of tensions between Russia and Georgia since the fall of 1999. Readers will recall the widely disseminated view that the deterioration in Russian-Georgian relations traces to the "Rose Revolution" of 2003 and Mikheil Saakashvili's rise to power. But the evidence offered by Illarionov discredits that view, as well as its corollary that it was the rise of democracy in Georgia that brought the Russian army across the Russian-Georgia border. As Illarionov shows, the process had begun well before 2003 and unfolded inexorably thereafter.

This is by no means to say that the Rose Revolution was irrelevant. In his chapter Swedish researcher Niklas Nilsson details the transformation of the Georgian state from reactive and ineffective under Shevardnadze to proactive and demanding under Saakashvili. Nilsson shows how the Georgian government pushed relentlessly to change the status quo in Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Backing its position with numerous United Nations resolutions, the new government in Tbilisi refused to accept Putin's steadily mounting steps to control these territories and looked instead to the Euro-Atlantic community to back Georgia's claims to sovereignty.

These chapters bring the reader to the present day and to more focused questions on what transpired during 2008. The chapters that follow detail Western and Georgian reactions to Moscow's increasingly assertive policies, which reached a fever pitch following the Western recognition of Kosovo and the NATO Bucharest Summit in early 2008. In his analysis of European and American reactions, Stephen Blank lays bare the ineptitude