

The Road to the Future

Georgia is my homeland.

It is located in Caucasus. There is nothing special in the size of our country, though it is bigger than some countries, such as Albania, Latvia, Lithuania, Belgium...

Georgia's history of statehood is about 25 centuries old. Aspiration for independence is deeply ingrained in Georgian character. But due to the development of history this aspiration was very often suppressed.

History of Georgia abounds with "political surprises". In this regard was the 20th century the most prominent period.

In 1922 the Soviet Union was created...

Georgia was made its part from its establishment. The Bolshevik state with its so called "Possess the World" (in Russian "Vladi-Mir") policies and "great, universal ideas" turned out to be disastrous not only for Georgia but for other Soviet republics as well including Russia. After the collapse of Soviet Union Georgian society had to painfully rethink its principles and beliefs. As soon as the "Red Terror" came to an end, Georgia received an opportunity to realize who its true friend was and who its true enemy was. It turned out that the former enemy – the West – was the true friend.

The most terrifying period of the 20th century was the World War Two. It was the greatest crime of mankind, crime against the mankind itself, resulting in fatal consequences. In this war Soviet Union managed not only to defeat Nazi Germany, but also to spread its influence over the half of Europe. It implied that "Red aggression" was able to cover the whole world. It became obvious that struggle between Bolshevism and Fascism was not the struggle between good and evil. No, it was just one evil defeating the other.

In the late 40-ies the invention of nuclear weapon, which became dominant tool of world politics, made the things extremely tense. It became obvious that the Cold War between the Soviet Union and the United States could go on forever.

Due to these circumstances the establishment of some framework of collective defense came to the top of the agenda of the Western European states. The notion of collective defense implied some coherent alliance.

On April 4 of 1949 in Washington DC, pursuing collective defense and security purposes, North Atlantic Treaty Organization was created. The alliance was determined to fight against any kind of aggression in order to protect secure environment, promote the democracy and contribute to the economic growth in the world.

Without any overestimation it can be stated that this goal has been achieved. There are lots of reasons for this success. One of them is the special bond among the NATO member states which stem from common values and principles. Not only common enemy but also the common values kept and still keep these states together.

57 years is quite a long period for any alliance and there is no reason to doubt that NATO will exist even longer. The alliance is exemplary for realizing the principle "one for all and all for one".

This is the organization of future because from the very day of its establishment it transforms purposefully. It has been expanding and will keep on expanding because not a few countries aspire to join the alliance.

I am obsessed with the words of William Jennings Bryan: "The destiny does not depend on chance, but on choice; you must not wait for it but reach for it". But the fact is that the destiny of Georgia nearly never depended on Georgia's choice. The clear evidence of it is our history. It is difficult to define our goals and plans without taking into consideration Russia's goals and plans. It is difficult to do it without looking back to the luckless past full of disappointments and the suppressions of attempts for building an independent state.

It took a long time for Georgia to become an independent state. It took even more to make the integration into NATO a realistic goal rather than a dream.

The first half of the 20th century brought devastation and destruction to the world. The period abounds with interstate or intrastate conflicts and economic hardships. This period definitely did not allow Georgia to define its goals and future. Our country has passed a long and winding road way and now the time has come to make a choice, a choice for defining our country's future.

The President of Georgia Mikhail Saakashvili stated that joining NATO would strengthen Georgia not only by providing unprecedented security guarantees but also by turning Georgia into an equal partner of the world's leading democratic nations.

Georgia has implemented Individual Partnership Action Plan with NATO. It covered reforms in various fields. Successful fulfillment of these reforms greatly contributes to the development of Georgia as a democratic state. Now Georgia is looking forward to MAP, the instrument for NATO integration. The implementation of MAP will bring Georgia closer to the alliance at the same time further contributing to its development. I am positive that Georgia will fulfill these reforms since now every Georgian makes its best to bring Georgia on the right path.

Apart from security guarantees, Georgia's integration into NATO will positively affect the situation in our region, making it more secure and more open for cooperation and democratic development. Besides, integration into NATO will provide Georgia with an opportunity for deeper integration within European structures.

NATO integration is not a goal determined by one individual or group of some individuals, it is **the will of the Georgian people**. Georgia views NATO as a true friend and partner and not as a protector or a supervisor.

Currently I am an ordinary school pupil, so I can not be involved in active political life, but I have my own opinion, my goals and my wishes.

I wish that Georgia does not miss this chance. It is the chance to stand side by side with leading democratic states. NATO integration will realize the hope of Georgian people.

The hope, that the way to the better future is cleared!

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