

**Zurab Khonelidze**

Professor, Doctor of Political Sciences Sokhumi State of University, Georgia  
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4625-7632>

## **GEORGIAN PARADIGM OT PEACE (University Diplomacy)**

### **DYPLOMACJA UNIWERSYTECKA – PARADYGMAT GRUZIŃSKI**

**Abstract:** The author has no intention to surprise the readers or to impose on them (people are already tired of the extraordinary lifestyle) his original vision even if it is based on his inner belief. He wishes to awaken the readers, and in full observance of Western pragmatism, Eastern deference and traditions (to which everything is subject), to pull them out of the odd vagueness in which they have been so badly engrossed, to give them more confidence, and to predispose them (primarily the Abkhazian and Ossetian readers) to get familiar with this work. That, in our opinion, will be useful for the readers themselves, who are experiencing their own failures and are interested in a better future for their people.

**Key words:** Peace, Conflict, Georgia, University Diplomacy, Geopolitical Space.

**Abstrakt:** Autor nie ma zamiaru zaskakiwać czytelników ani narzucać im (ludzie są już zmęczeni niezwykłym stylem życia) swoją oryginalną wizję, nawet jeśli opiera się ona na jego wewnętrznej wierze. Pragnie obudzić czytelników i przy pełnym poszanowaniu zachodniego pragmatyzmu, wschodniego szacunku i tradycji (któremu wszystko podlega), wyrwać ich z dziwnej niejasności, w którą byli tak bardzo pochłonięci, aby dać im więcej zaufania, oraz predysponowanie ich (przede wszystkim czytelników abchaskich i osetyjskich) do zapoznania się z tym dziełem. To naszym zdaniem będzie przydatne dla samych czytelników, którzy doświadczają własnych niepowodzeń i są zainteresowani lepszą przyszłością dla swoich ludzi.

**Słowa kluczowe:** Gruzja, dyplomacja uniwersytecka, przestrzeń geopolityczna.

Conflicts play an important role in the history of the mankind. From the 19th century onwards, especially in the 20th century, one of its types, the conflict between nations and ethnic groups, has become widespread in international politics. It is argued that the misinterpretation of the „right of self-determination of nations”, established during the era of decolonization, played a major role in this process. Therefore, all ethno-political conflicts have an extremely complex nature, which, for the most part, is linked to the nation's aspiration to establish a state.

Along with what is currently a given, other circumstances have become an obstacle for Georgia, including the country's advantage - its geostrategic situation. The reason is quite explicable! On the threshold of the postsoviet space transformation, each and every Georgian government failed: 1. To find a suitable place for the country's natural-historical function and take an adequate step, compatible with the demands of the time; 2. To identify in the prospective destiny of Georgia the traditionally involved external factors, inherent confrontational forces, envisage the interests of major geopolitical, geoeconomic and cultural-civilizational centers, transnational corporations, political systems, the world's dominant and regional leader states (in short-term or long-term perspective) 3. To recognize that, due to contradictory nature of certain states, the territory of Georgia is not big enough a space for the main stakeholder countries for matching their forces and interests and for bringing those interests into harmony with Georgian national interests.

With its complex neighborhood, Georgia is not an autonomous locked-in system. It is at the epicenter of the intersection of geopolitical, geoeconomic and military-political interests that is not only Georgian, but also the South Caucasian, united Caucasian socio-cultural and political space. Determining our destiny and realizing our state goals, the restoration of unity and territorial integrity in the first place, goes beyond the borders of the country, assuming regional and global scope. It cannot depend solely on Georgia or the country which still occupies 20% of our state.

The region, from the historic era of the Great Silk Road, with key strategic locations (existing or potential energy corridor, road of trade links, etc.), is a place of confrontation between the interest groups of the American, Russian, European, Chinese, Turkish, Iranian, Asian and other international forces, related to the formation of the New World Order of the 21st century.

In consequence of inefficient and inconsistent activities of the past authorities of Georgia, the confrontation with the energy-empire, the Russian factor in the international system, the increased interest in the Middle Eastern countries, the international community could not/did not realize the real reasons behind the mines against national sovereignty, laid by the Soviet Empire in our country (as well as in other countries of post-Soviet space), the reasons for provoking of political conflicts, named like 'ethnopolitical conflicts', later turning them into a global problem.

Although the United Nations Organization has attempted to pursue the status quo policy in the post-Soviet countries, apparently, due to insufficient motivation for the problematic Georgian state (the reason is primarily in us), because of only formal internationalization of the internal and political conflict, did not turn out to be ready in resolving the conflicts in the post-Cold War period

in Georgia, Abkhazia (1993), South Ossetia (2008) and other realities in terms of understanding the role of Georgia as a progressive country in solving a common regional problem.

It is well known that inter-ethnic relations are distinguished by their high conflict bias. And when it comes to political errors, their explosive potential increases several times. The collapse of the Soviet Union, not only within the countries but also internationally, has led to cardinal shifts. It was the time when the authorities had to pursue the most correct and moderate policies, replacing „Marxist internationalism” with national ideology in order to create a sense of united statehood among ethnic nations of Georgia. Unfortunately, under the leadership of Zviad Gamsakhurdia, the eternal idea of Georgia - the consolidation of the nation around freedom and sense of unity - was briefly ended by a military coup. But in the civil war the anti-state groups, governed by external forces, both ethnically and politically, fought each other for the sake of material gain and power. Against this backdrop, perception of Georgia as a national political body often turned into a conflict between armed groups, tailored to their own personal interests. Certain forces have used the current situation for ethnic confrontation and conflict. Part of them created armed conflicts within the country, hidden by political ideologies.

Though Georgia has been able to overcome clashes between the illegal groups and the state with difficulty, ethnic conflicts remain the most acute problem to date.

Since 1993, the UN Security Council has adopted dozens of political resolutions on the issue of Abkhazia, expressing support and respect for the principle of Georgia's territorial integrity, the unconditional return of Internally Displaced Persons, the property of IDPs. Here we mean the nonrecognition of the so-called elections, held by Abkhazian separatist government, etc.

The UN Security Council also laid the groundwork for a „UN Observer Mission” in Georgia. “The Group of Georgian Friends of the UN Secretary-General”<sup>57</sup> has been in operation since 1997, comprising the United States, Germany, Great Britain and France. The aim of this group was to resolve the conflict in Georgia peacefully at the expense of increased international engagement.

Herewith, in accordance with the ceasefire agreement of August 12, 2008 between Georgia and Russia, on October 15 of that year, the Geneva International Negotiations Format was established. It is co-chaired by the so-called UN, EU and OSCE and is held between the parties to the August war - Georgia and Russia. Representatives from the US are involved in the talks, including the Chairman of the Government of the Autonomous Republic of Abkhazia, Head of the Interim Administration of the so-called South Ossetian Autonomous Region and representatives of the occupational and de facto regimes from Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali region.

The Geneva talks aim to: develop complex security mechanisms and security guarantees for the region as a whole, including the Georgian-Abkhaz and Georgian-Ossetian confrontation zones, which in itself means taking into account the interests of the Abkhaz and South Ossetian sides and defining their share of responsibility.

The current multilateral international format, where Georgia is not a minority and Russia has a dialogue with the Georgian side in the presence of our allies and strategic partners - the Americans and Europeans - has created a situation where „everything is in order outwardly”. However, in reality, the international discussion has failed to start the process of de-occupation which was the the main goal. The reason - the problem is not in the mediators or in their failure to fulfill their obligations, but in the unjustifiably exaggerated expectations that were falsely established by the former authorities and the so-called elites in order to escape their responsibilities.

Thus, the urgent task is not to abandon these major international formats or replace them, but to change existing formats (in addition to creating new ones) that will change the approach to the conflict with a new understanding of the problem and increase the efficiency and productivity of the format. We mean the increase of the status of the current format instead of relying on recommendations of working groups that have no obligation to act, etc.

Though „peace is best provided by force that can influence the states’ calculations,”<sup>58</sup> two important circumstances are worth considering.

First: “Georgia, even today, as for centuries, stands at the crossroads of civilizations. Its geopolitical, geoeconomic and cultural-civilizational situation is constantly conditioned by crossing of interests of other states. Therefore, the tasks facing the country and the pursuit of national interests require extraordinary prudence and effort. And in order for Georgia to be able to fulfill the key tasks it faces, it must take into account the political balance of forces in the region and in the world.”<sup>59</sup>

Second: In the calculations of the great states we should have a position of so-called aggregated structural force, not of absolute force, which is directed not against absolute forces but against forces mobilized around a particular issue.

The western political establishment has proposed a new format of securing world peace and prosperity and public relations in the form of scientific diplomacy. It is based on world experience and, above all, in parallel with the resolution of scientific-technical and economic problems in modern international relations it builds trust and engagement in the process of cooperation.

The world practice shows that the proposed models of conflict regulation, based on international organizations, governmental and non-governmental resources,

and unplanned and uncoordinated activities of the state, still have not overcome the current political „deadlocked” conflicts. Examples of such conflicts are Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali region (Georgia), Mountainous Karabakh (Azerbaijan), Transnistria (Moldova), Bosnia, Herzegovina, Kosovo (former Yugoslavia), Kashmir (India), Cyprus (Greece, Turkey), Taiwan (China), Hong Kong (China), South Tyrol (Italy), etc. If we do not want the Georgian state politics to imitate the style of avoidance of real problems, we have to reason philosophically instead of dramatizing the current situation. This kind of approach will help us identify the primary task - „what we need” and „what malady we suffer”. The main problem is how to find the way out, which mainly depends on strategic thinking of the Georgian people and its authorities, on putting our mind in good order, on our own prudence and efficiency.

In fact, there are two ways to resolve the conflict: forceful and peaceful. So we the Georgians are not faced with choice. We just don't have it! Solely a peaceful coexistence is the only means of ensuring the country's integrity. Before making a choice what to do, it is necessary to properly state a new goal for the state, to justify its need, its benefits, including for the outside world, and to formulate a consistent, strategic plan of action (program-project), compatible with the current goal, necessary outlook and existent conditions. With presently available resources (institutions), this cannot be done. Therefore, we think that a new, non-politicized institution, an intellectual resource is needed, which will complement the chosen strategy of conflict resolution in the field of politics, and promote the understanding of the need to improve relations (even if this serves our own pragmatic interests) between the opposed parties.

The path of building our statehood happens to be Georgian-Abkhazian, Georgian-Ossetian and multi-ethnic. This path today goes via education as a process of systemic actions, via its highest peak - science as the true source of objective knowledge, and via the motivated, pragmatic, and the healthiest part of this society, our next generation – the youth.

The institution that comprises them - the unity of education, science and youth - is an educational institution. It is able to not only meet these requirements (surely, without any harm to itself) but to create the free basic space for generating and forming universal values and to become the starting point for a peaceful resolution of the conflict. Yes, university - the basic space for generating and forming universal values, synonymous to education, science, culture, human traditions, progress, civilization and, most importantly, freedom everywhere and at all times.

The idea of university which is a mission in itself includes the principles such as freedom, secularism, democracy, tolerance, and so on. It was on the basis of these liberal values that a common European consciousness, the civil society,

industrialization, modernization of the economy and the improvement of public welfare took shape.

The world's centuries-long experience confirms university as an elite hub of education. It:

- Combines historically accepted traditional knowledge and modern innovative approaches;
- Helps overcome the universal problems and the contradictions between generations and the actors of different interests;
- Is an institution, connecting key beneficiaries - the students and teachers, issuing from subjective and profit-gaining objective and pragmatic position; naturally procreates the opportunities for their cooperation and exchange of information between them, synergizes interests, ensures the realization of continuity principles;
- Is characterized by the highest achievement of mankind - the key concepts of practical philosophy and human politics, the core values of Western thought - personal and scientific freedom. This implies the possibility of utilizing university or academic freedom without which creative thinking is impossible to form and develop;
- Enjoys the public trust and expectations of a historically established institutional unit. It is focused on the formation of a civil society of the future that can determine the fate of the state and people according to national values;
- Is a solid foundation for education along with other opportunities, acquiring information, generating and disseminating new knowledge, identifying and implementing individual skills, giving way to critical, creative, strategic, genuine state thinking, forming correct, knowledge-based visions, relevant to time challenges;
- Is a process of progress and continuity in which the middle class and the elite are formed, national culture is developing, first and foremost, in the youth; and more importantly, is a place where the *Zeitgeist* is felt and the "seeking the truth as a prerogative of a human, independent individual" takes place.<sup>60</sup>

Creates a real opportunity for the national energy of adapting to time to go through the gales of a formative global space, fulfill a historic, extraordinary mission of maintaining and strengthening self-regulatory skill, etc.

Under the current conditions, based on the new understanding of its function, and through a new mission, creates an opportunity to become the center of

the country's continued progress, education, culture and social life, subject to international informal policy, which, together with an active discussion of modern theories of international science schools, presents to the public the projects, based on interdisciplinary research, alternative recommendations for resolving problems, including territorial integrity, etc.

Of course, since its inception, the university has positioned itself as a universal educational hub, without which any kind of social success and the right perspective for development are unthinkable. It was in the bosom of the university that the idea of forming a „new Europe” was born. But factually, there are serious problems in Europe and in the world at large, which unfortunately cannot be resolved by existing approaches. The fact is that university as such is not fully functioning today - it does not form a unified vision of problems and does not offer a mechanism for overcoming problems. We think it can be explained as follows:

- Our understanding of university, or its capabilities, is exaggerated;
- University (Education and Science) is “lagging in time, and as a product of change, is failing to become a major social political force, being unable to meet modern challenges.

Therefore, it is necessary to further modernize university. University has the resources to develop and has the opportunity to create new practices, using existing lore and scientific methodologies. But unfortunately, to deal with modern problems and internal transformation, this is not enough. Thus, it is necessary to determine what kind of problems we are dealing with. Generally speaking, when it comes to global problems, meaning the conflicts (inter-ethnic, political, pseudo ethnopolitical, military, social, religious, economic, etc.) in the first place, which is not surprising since modern conflicts are the most large-scale events having a negative impact on social life. We do not mean identifying the reasons for a specific conflict such as our local problem, but generally the basis for all kinds of conflicts; that is to say, identifying the beginning of all confrontation - alienation between countries, with a view to its further elimination.

The task is very complex and requires not only the knowledge and experience of the university or their deepening, but also the essential transformation and emergence of new science as new knowledge. Unfortunately, today's university does not have the resources and capability to operate independently as a single subject. Moreover, to our surprise, today university's idea itself is in crisis and needs to be updated with innovative ideas relevant to time and development-oriented action. Considering the elementary truth, which is a necessary condition of the law of nature - only two entities can give new life, if necessary, in case of their necessary compatibility, by „pairing”. Who, or what can be a healthy, university-compatible thing that, with its inimitable and inexhaustible opportunities like



university, justifies its existence, has a rich past - roots, future, enjoys high authority and only positive expectations of society, associated with peace and the art? To answer this difficult question, we must go beyond our goal - and generally the biggest problem of conflict resolution. It is a fact that the basis for all conflicts, regardless of diversity, is common to all, and it must be sought in the alienation of relations. We mean people, social groups, institutions, countries, etc.

Thus, resulting from the importance of conflict resolution and the mission and common goal of university, who can become the most important partner of the university, it is only diplomacy. Although, like the university, it has lagged behind time in spite of modernization, but as the art of relationships, it has the only potential to bring diplomacy (peaceful negotiations) to a high scientific level. And it can be realized only in university.

#### A Little Something About Diplomacy:

- We have already noted in the introduction to this work that ‚diplomacy’ is one of the most complex and at the same time the most important areas of human social and political activity in the history of human development, which has so far paved the way for a difficult and challenging development.
- Much has to be written about diplomacy and a lot will be written in the future. Despite divergent views on it as a subject, it can be said with certainty that in the modern era the importance of diplomacy is increasing and its scope is expanding. The fact is, the world has never been so dependent on strong, predictable, consistent, unified standards and criteria for diplomacy as it is today.
- Diplomacy originates from the day of foreign relations and the existence of foreign policy. Political term - Diplomacy is of Greek origin and means two paired slats or small boards with the inscription: „Diplomacy”, which was given to ambassadors to carry out their mission, rights and duties. Diplomacy dates back to the days of foreign relations - foreign policy. The word „diplomacy” has been gradually refined in substance and its place and purpose in state policy has become clear, and has acquired the function of one of the most important roles of the international community - the proper implementation of foreign policy goals and objectives.

In modern international relations, there are three meanings of diplomacy:

1. The conduct of relations between states and other entities by official agents with a reputation in world politics through peaceful means. This is the broadest understanding of this term<sup>61</sup>.
2. The Oxford English Dictionary<sup>62</sup> presents Sir Harold Nicholson’s explanation: “Diplomacy is the management of international relations



through negotiation; the method by which these relations are matched by ambassadors: the work or art of the diplomat”<sup>63</sup>

3. To conduct international relations in the way they are used in everyday sense of the term. Hadley Bull cites Sir Ernest Satoo’s well-known definition in this regard: “Diplomacy is the use of intelligence and tact to govern relations between the governments of independent states, which sometimes extend to relations with the vassal states of these governments; or, to put it more briefly, the conduct of activities between states through the methods of peace”<sup>64</sup>.

In our case, the subject of special interest and study is - diplomacy as an instrument of Georgia - subject of international law - for relations with the outside world (foreign policy), for negotiating peacefully, protecting the rights of its citizens and the interests of the country. More precisely, it is the science and art of negotiation, or simply the art of doing business, conducting and handling political negotiations both inside and outside the country. While diplomats are concerned about armed conflicts between nations, their activities differ from those of military operations and are of a peaceful nature only. In particular, it seeks to find common ground between the parties and to resolve conflicts only through negotiation. „Diplomacy holidays are called war,” the result of diplomacy failure is conflict. Peaceful resolution of conflicts, reconciliation of different, often diametrically opposed interests, restoring broken equilibrium between stakeholders, and ensuring their co-operation constitute key to diplomacy.

The term „diplomacy” - while retaining its classical roots and still being one of the most important instruments of policy making (mainly foreign) to serve the goals of a state, has undergone transformation, lost its unambiguous definition and can be said to have expanded its meaning as needed.

Today, the public interest in diplomacy and foreign policy (as well as in internal policy) is significantly increasing. Its principles, methods and means of implementation have been cognitively and emotionally accessible to the public because of their free access to information. As a result, this field is of particular interest to the wider masses. In general, interest in politics and public involvement deepened the democratic principles of states, made public institutions stronger and more independent, and shaped modern civil society, which in turn led Western civilization to economic and political success.

The fact is that the political system left without the control and involvement of civil society may find itself in a difficult economic situation within the country as well as in captivity of obligations to other states or international organizations. In such a situation, the foreign policy of the state will not be effective and therefore no party policy and pre-election program will be considered complete. For a small country like Georgia, it is vital to form a foreign policy vision within

the country and a diplomatic guide to its implementation, based on democratic principles, vertical state-society relations.

Studies show that globalization and digital technology development processes are actively restricting the use of traditional professions. However, the importance of such a „conservative” profession as diplomacy grows. A new political reality is emerging before us: the growing importance of uniform rules of conduct for all players (regardless of „size and weight”). However, particularly difficult for Georgia is the fact that, as a result of the open attack on these rules, there are already two open conflicts in the 21st century on the European territory (the first in 2008 in Georgia and the second in 2014 in Ukraine).

Along with global processes, diplomacy should not be left behind by the dynamic development of society, which is associated with the unprecedented intensification of international relations, not just with official talks, but with the development of new forms and methods of interaction between peoples. These processes lead to the emergence of new types and forms of diplomacy. Anyone who evaluates, understands, and uses these processes in a timely manner will have a whole new set of leverage effects. Information is transmitted over thousands of kilometers in real time, instantly becoming the property of millions. As a result, today, in essence, every citizen has his or her own views on diplomacy, as well as on domestic, foreign and global policy issues.

Diplomacy is important for all countries without any exclusion, especially for a state like Georgia. We mean breaking diplomatic relations with our strong neighbor the Russian Federation (the field of traditional diplomacy included), permanent member of the UN Security Council (for obvious reasons - the temporary occupant of part of our land), which has led to the division of the unified living organism - the Georgian state, to the creation of dividing lines between the temporarily separated ethnicities, thus questioning the prospective common good in general. This is the difficult reality in which our country has to defend its sovereignty, independence, inviolability of borders and territorial integrity.

However, Georgia has its own advantages: historical justice and international law - the pillar of the modern world order. While it is good to have this advantage of ours as a resource, there is a need to create an opportunity to use it. Otherwise the resource may work against the interest of our country (that has happened to us many times). The need to realize this goal preconditions the indispensability of strong diplomacy.

**REFERENCES:**

- Karl Jaspers. *Die Idee der Universität*. Springer, Berlin, Heidelberg. 1961
- Committee on Global Science Policy and Science Diplomacy (2011). *National Academies U.S. and International Perspectives on Global Science Policy and Science Diplomacy: Report of a Workshop* National Academies Press, ISBN 978-0-309-22438-3
- Olaf Pedersen. *The First Universities: Studium Generale and the Origins of University Education in Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press. 1997
- Sir Ernest Satow. *A Guide to Diplomatic Practice*. 4th edn (London), 1957
- Fedoroff, N. *Science diplomacy in the 21st Century*. Cell, 2009
- Harold Nicolson, *Diplomacy* (Oxford University press), 1950
- Roin Metreveli. *Adorned with a crown of merit and torture*. Historical Essays, Tbilisi, 2009
- Zaza Shatirishvili. *University Idea: Two Paradigms*. European Searches Series; Collection of articles-2006. Georgian society and European values. Tbilisi, 2007
- David Malazonia. *XIX Century Georgian Historical Opinion on the Classification of Nation Marks, Science and Society Development Foundation*. Periodical Scientific Journal "Intellect", N 3 (26), 2006;
- Герман Вейль. *Университети и наука в Германии*, В книге: *Математическое Мышление*. перевод с английского и немецкого составитель Ю.А.Данилов под редакцией Б. В.Бирюкова и А. Н. Паршина. Москва, 1989
- Гамахария Дж., Гогия.Б., Абхазия – историческая область Грузии. Тбилиси. 1997