



War and peace – possible scenarios

Pavel Usov | 05.09.2008

Who started the recent war in South Ossetia and why? Answers to these questions are unequivocal and simultaneously complicated. From many points of view, these answers depend not on the state of our knowledge, but on information sources which we use. Meanwhile, only one thing is clear. The US and Russia are indisputably involved in this small war to the same extent. However, the implications are different.

In the case of Russia, war is a permanent condition. Nevertheless, it's not just the condition of the state. It's the historical being of Russia in which there is no place for peace. Solely in the course of the 20th century, Russia took part in dozens of wars in its territory or abroad, in "cold" as well as "hot" ones and in global as well as local ones. Suffice it to say, Russo-Japanese war, later it was "imperialistic" World War I followed by the civil war, war in the Far East at the end of the 1930's, World War II, Korean War, Afghanistan, Chechnya and finally the recent war in Georgia. Aside from other things, Russian state waged intensive and far-reaching wars with own people. Mass repressions of the 1930's as well as collectivisation attest to it. We may say that the history of Russia in the 20th century and at the beginning of the 21st century is the history of war.

In the above-mentioned era, we would hardly find a period of twenty years during which there were no internal or external conflicts and turbulences. The contemporary image and content of Russia was created during wars and by wars. There would be no contemporary Russia without wars. It was wars which created and destroyed its power and stirred up the hatred and fear of neighbouring states. It seemed that the



defeat in the Cold War brought Russia to its knees, shifted it to the periphery of the world and subjugated it to other states' interests. Notwithstanding this, new armed conflicts were an impulse for Russia enabling it to revive and lay claims to the control over the world again. Many people were watching with worries but also enthusiasm Russia's ascent in the 21st century and predicted new threats and challenges for the political arrangement of the world which had been established after the dissolution of the USSR.

From the point of view of metaphysics, we may voice the surmise that conflict and fight are internal energy helping Russia to preserve itself. Russia has always been a loser without war and fight. When in the state of calmness and peace, it starts to fail immediately and becomes an internally instable and dissolving entity. The basis of practically all geopolitical and philosophical concepts is the principle of the permanent battle between good and evil in terms of which omnipresent Russia is not only on the side of the good, truth and Christianity, it's also the expression of these values as "the state of truth" **(1)**. Obviously, western civilisation is the personification of evil. For Russia, current geopolity is "the fight of faithful Russian orthodox civilisation against renegade anti-Christian western civilisation that turned away from God's truth" **(2)**. Such a position is characteristic also of other states including the US which waged merciless war on the "evil empire" in the course of fifty years and keeps on fighting against the personification of evil in the form of "global terrorism". Moreover, according to US politicians and press the "evil empire" has been restored **(3)** and therefore US holy mission goes on. Directly as well as indirectly, both countries and civilisations defend the right to be on the side of good by all conceivable means and persuade the rest of the world in all possible ways that the opponent is nothing more than a personification of evil.



Similar approach to the comprehension of the surrounding world isn't surprising since evil doesn't regard and label itself as evil, but exclusively good. A criminal doesn't dub itself criminal and the terrorists, who kill peace-loving people, don't perceive themselves to be terrorists and murderers. They are convinced that they fight against evil and violence or for liberty, independence and holy idea. The mentioned affirmation isn't supposed to label Russia or the West as the adherents of evil. I only want to emphasise that the concept of good and evil is relative and that their formulation depends on the point of view, position and historical context. The categories of good and evil are as changeable as the history and human kind themselves. Not a single war in the world did start in the name of an evil goal. Sovereigns and leaders were inspired solely by "lofty" aims and good intentions. Even Hitler unleashed the world war in the name of the welfare of great Aryan-Germanic nation which faced the fetters of Communists, Jews and Freemasons. Some Baltic states still perceive the German army to be a liberation one.

Taking account of this fact, we may come to an exclusively paradoxical conclusion that there is no continual battle between good and evil under way in the world, but only between good and good, or rather, evil and evil which have been hiding behind lofty aims. Our aim, however, isn't to deliberate on the problems of good and evil, but rather the possible scenarios of the recent conflict in South Ossetia and the new geopolitical arrangement in which Russia can find itself. Philosophical introduction was necessary only for the underscoring of the fact that the use of moral categories isn't appropriate within politics. In all probability, people deciding on the destiny of the world don't use them either. Morality has always been a tool of manipulation with own, or rather, foreign nations and it's an efficient means of justifying the "lofty intentions" of individual states which conceals the genuine objectives of politics. In



other words, the more the politicians speak of morality, the more amoral their steps are.

Analysing the conflict in South Ossetia by means of moral categories, the right would be on nobody's side and it also wouldn't be conceivable to label anyone as a culprit. The right is equally on everyone's side and everyone is equally guilty. South Ossetia has become one of the places of the encounter of two forces which assumed that they were right and that they fight against evil when justifying principles. Moreover, both sides are categorically convinced that the other one is to blame. Each of the direct participants of the conflict in question acted on the basis of its past, present and future interests as well as its own perception of good and evil. That's why it will be very difficult to assess these events objectively.

The West, as we have already mentioned, has always regarded Russia as a danger for its interests and any steps aimed against Russia were evaluated positively by western politicians. In this situation Russia will remain in the position of culprit even if it comes out that the right is objectively on its side. For instance, the Speaker of the European Parliament Hans-Gert Pöttering said in an interview for the Italian daily *Corriere della sera*: "Unfortunately, President Saakashvili has made a mistake by attacking South Ossetia. Russia, however, made even a bigger mistake by attacking Georgia, which is an independent and sovereign state." **(4)** Similar instruments are used also by Russia, which considers the West and predominantly the US to be a threat for the stability and balance of the world **(5)**. Thus the conflict has become the result of severe dissensions and double standards existing in contemporary geopolitics.



Each of the sides has been waiting for their opponent's failure within foreign policy and takes advantage of any hesitation or mistake of their rival in order to extend the sphere of its geopolitical influence. Human rights and the principles of morality and amorality are ignored. We may say that everything, which is good for Russia, is from Russian viewpoint moral, whereas in American eyes it is amoral, and vice versa, things, which are good for the US and the West, cannot be in principle moral from Russian viewpoint. In other words, the perception of morality is the result of the conduction of concrete interests of the particular country.

That's why it's necessary to handle moral categories very carefully when discussing the South Ossetian conflict. The extent of the morality and justifiability of the conflict was dependent right on its result. If Georgia was the victor, from the point of view of morality it would be assessed positively by the West. To the contrary, Russia would assess it negatively. Since Russia is the victor, according to the West there is no morality and justifiability at all.

The complicatedness of the objective analysis and assessment of events in South Ossetia emerges from the lack of true information from conflict zone. Testimonies are divided into mendacious and truthful ones not according to the content, but from the viewpoint of the source of its origin. All news brought by the Russian media was initially considered a lie by the rest of the world and all news from Georgia and foreign news agencies were considered untrue in Russia. These are the reasons why no one can say who the instigator of fights was. Who is right and who is to blame, whom we can believe in and whom not. How can we assess and analyse something which we haven't witnessed, which we haven't seen and which we haven't touched with our hands?



The Russian media brought regularly testimonies that prior to the outbreak of open war, Georgian snipers attacked civilians in Cchinval and other Ossetian villages. According to them six inhabitants of South Ossetia were killed and other twenty two injured before the outbreak of open conflict **(6)**. Heartrending pictures appeared in which a mother buried her son, killed by a sniper, in the yard of own house, because she wasn't able to do so in the cemetery due to constant shelling. Spectators could see mass flows of refugees from Ossetia to Russia and the resentment of the citizens of this republic who asked Russia for help.

Alternative sources, Georgian ones in particular, claimed that Georgian posts and territory was regularly the target of shelling conducted by Ossetian paramilitary forces. According to news from Tbilisi one policeman and six civilians were injured in the aftermath of shelling of Georgian villages in the period from 1st to 2nd August **(7)**.

In the aftermath of the above-mentioned provocations, which meant the breach of the ceasefire agreement, on 8th August Tbilisi launched an official operation with the aim of securing constitutional order in South Ossetia. This fact may be recognised as an objective one as it was brought by all media as well as the Minister of Defence and Georgian Peace Forces Commander **(8)**. The securing of constitutional order was conducted by means of the entry of military troops into the territory of the unrecognised republic. Subsequently on 9th August, Russia took adequate measures. Their name was similarly pathetic – “Operation to force Georgia to peace.” Both sides acted in terms of international law and defended their interests according to them.

As for the news coverage of the actions as a whole, it was realised in a spirit of the principle “you are the fool yourself.” If disputing the veracity of news brought by the Russian media, we could state with certainty that nothing what the Russian side has



spoken of, i.e. thousands of killed people, thousands of refugees and the destruction of Cchinval, has happened. It's been the result of sophisticated information manipulations and montage. The aim was to deceive own citizens as well as the whole world and to undertake own "malicious" steps in the information war and during the creation of political illusions. The fact that Cchinval has been destroyed, however, has been confirmed by foreign observers as well as Georgian side. Anyway, the difference rests on the fact that Georgia claims that the town has been destroyed by the Russians and that the entry of Georgian troops into the territory of Ossetia was a reaction to the entry of Russian troops. The Georgia State Minister Temur Yakobashvili stated that it was not until the Russian convoy of military technology entered South Ossetia that the decision to attack Cchinval was adopted. "Fairy tales that we attacked Cchinval by means of Grad rocket launchers are a lie. Cchinval was bombed by the Russians after we had been occupying the town for four and a half hours. We were shelling surrounding elevations using the air force and Grad." **(9)**

As a matter of fact positions and situation evaluations presented by the Russian Federation are diametrically opposed. In this case it is necessary to question the information and steps of both sides and shrug off the whole information chaos. Is it possible that world politicians have been brainwashing the people intentionally in order to divert attention away from much more frightening events like the conquest of the Earth by Martians?

The duality of information, opinions and statements about the conflict causes that even such an analytical method, which concentrates on the advantages obtained by the given side thanks to the conflict, becomes inefficient.



At the beginning it's necessary to define the apparent and hidden advantages and interests of big players in the region, i.e. the US and Russia. For the US, participation in the conflict should lead to the achievement of following goals:

1. the reinforcement of its presence in the Caucasus;
2. the definitive ouster of Russia from the region in question;
3. the manifestation of own power and significance in the global arena, the preservation of own dominant status on the one hand, the manifestation of the weakness and geopolitical weakness of Russia on the other one.

It's obvious that Russia cannot agree with such a condition and strives to carry out own interests among which are:

1. the effort to maintain its positions in the region and not allow the US to push through its policy;
2. the discredit of Georgia and Mikheil Saakashvili's regime. The attainment of the change of political regime in Georgia in the case of favourable coincidence. If this scenario was realised, the suspension of the process of the independence declaration of Abkhazia and South Ossetia would thus become a gesture of Russia's goodwill. In the case of pro-Russian regime, these republics could remain a part of Georgia. This variant, however, isn't probable as the Federation Council of the Russian Federation and the State Duma recognised the independence of both republics on 25th August and on the next day, Russian President Dmitry Medvedev confirmed the recognition of the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia.
3. the attachment of new territories to Russia and the enfeeblement of Georgian territorial integrity. This is the most probable scenario under current circumstances.



4. the overall destabilisation of the region which could lead to the disruption of oil supplies on the route Baku – Tbilisi – Ceyhan, the enfeeblement of Georgian trustworthiness in the eyes of western partners and the strengthening of Russian position on global, or rather, European energy market.
5. the retrieval of lost positions in the international arena and in geopolitical room.

When assessing the advantages of the conflict for its participants, we may conclude almost with certainty that to some extent it was advantageous for all initiated parties with the exception of killed and harmed people as well as the beaten party, which needn't necessarily know that it has been defeated.

Considering such an arrangement of powers, the escalation of the conflict between Georgia and its former republics could have been provoked by any side. Russia needed to provoke Georgia into an extensive attack and the genocide of civilians in order to put its plans into practice and conduct retaliatory strike to save civilians and Russian citizens.

Convinced of Russia being incapable of offering resistance to its strong ally, Georgia could have been the direct instigator of the conflict too. It isn't ruled out that the long-running course of the geopolitical defeats of Russia in its traditional spheres of strategic presence, for example, in the Balkans, in the Middle East, as well as failed attempts to restore parity with the US have convinced the US of an absolute helplessness of Russia as a real opponent.

Besides other things, the declaration of Kosovo's independence induced the necessity of an ultimate solution to the question of breakaway republics since those could have taken advantage of the declaration and separate completely from Georgia



at any moment. For both unrecognised republics, the conflict was inevitable owing to the fact that they could find themselves in the position of the “victims” of Georgian aggression and demonstrate Tbilisi’s unwillingness as well as the objectivity of South Ossetian and Abkhaz desire for independence of Georgia to the whole world.

Thus the conflict in Georgia was to a large degree convenient to all sides involved. Main differences consist solely in the real advantages of both sides as for short-term and long term prospects. It might seem at first sight that Russia is the victor of the conflict, whereas the US and its satellite Georgia have lost. From a long-term point of view, however, Russia’s success looks otherwise.

As I have already mentioned, advantages for the Russian Federation are evident from the short-term point of view. It could demonstrate a hard stance on the US and its satellite Georgia, show the entire world that Russia was ready to become real geopolitical power and pursue independent policy. Russia has got the possibility to control new territories. Considering the mentioned geopolitical profits, an impartial observer can surely say that Russia was the backstage conductor of the whole conflict. In fact Georgia has been defeated while Russia has confirmed its imperial aggression again.

Nevertheless, if we would take account of the long-term prospect and presuppose the existence of a second scenario, the situation might look quite differently. It’s natural that the author of this scenario is the US. Let’s admit that it had in mind more global objectives than just a victory in a local conflict. Among these objectives are:

1. the expansion of political and military presence throughout the world;
2. NATO enlargement;
3. the full-scale discredit, international isolation and weakening of Russia.



A conflict directly involving Russia was necessary for the realisation of the mentioned objectives. The territory of Abkhazia and South Ossetia was just a formal part of Georgia. From the viewpoint of economy and policy, they were independent states integrated into the sphere of the economic and political influence of Russia. The currency used in these republics was Russian ruble, not Georgia lari. The inhabitants acquired Russian nationality and could cross freely Russian borders. In other words, these territories were lost for Georgia. However, they became a great pull for Russia.

Any variant of events result would be favourable for the US in the given case. If Russia remained in the position of external observer, its international authority would be disputed as well. It would be just another proof of Russian inability to face the US and defend own interests. The geopolitical presence of Russia in the Caucasus would be weakened and US influence stepped up. This could affect also the development in Nagorno-Karabakh and impinge upon the interests of Armenia as Russian ally.

Owing to Russian “victory” in the war, the US has been gaining the upper hand in global rivalry. The Russian Federation is perceived by the international community to be an aggressor no matter if the right is on its side or not **(10)**. Measures aimed against Georgia, which has made a mistake, are considered inadequate **(11)**. Russia poses a threat not only for small independent republics, which it wants to occupy with the aim of restoring the empire, but also for the world’s stability.

Steps made by Russia were meant to convince Europe and other parties of lofty US intentions as well as the need to accept quickly Georgia and Ukraine as NATO and



EU members. The Former National Security Advisor Richard Holbrooke says: “The behaviour of Moscow in Georgia represents imminent danger to the arrangement of Europe and the world. Georgia deserves our solidarity and support. Only a strong transatlantic cooperation may cease this conflict and rectify the damage.” **(12)** On 13th August, 2008, the US daily The Wall Street Journal brought a commentary of American analysts: “In support of democracy in Georgia, Georgia has to feel the support. The West has to impose economic and political sanctions on Russia. This conflict manifests the weakness of global arrangement. The West has to show its ability to wage hypothetical new cold war to Russia. A major revenge for the intervention of Russia against Georgia will be its direct way to NATO and the EU.” **(13).**

The acceptance of new countries as NATO members isn't to be perceived a caprice of the US', but the inevitability of protecting weak states. US expansionism, which started to be perceived negatively in many European countries, will acquire new and noble image. The deployment of US anti-missile shield components in the Czech Republic and Poland fits in clearly with this system. These components will serve not only the interests of the US and its security, but the security of the entire western civilisation under the conditions of possible conflict with Russia.

Now it's apparent that Russia has lost one of its primary allies, namely Germany **(14)**, which vetoed the entry of Georgia and Ukraine into NATO at the NATO Summit in Bucharest. For Russia, Ukrainian NATO entry will stand for a colossal geopolitical loss which is incomparable with low yields in the Caucasus. Aside from this, these “valueless profits”, which doesn't contain strategic natural sources, did cost and will cost Russia a tidy sum. Russia has spent 12.5 billion rubbles, i.e. 1.5 billion dollars, just on military operations in South Ossetia **(15)**. That time, a considerable outflow of



foreign currencies from Russian market, caused by increased risk, was registered. According to the evaluations of the Finance Minister Aleksey Kudrin the capital outflow reached approximately 7 billion dollars **(16)**. Russia at the same time committed itself to restore all destroyed buildings in South Ossetia. This will cost around 16 billion rubbles. Russia plans to invest almost 10 billion rubbles in South Ossetian economy **(17)**. In the case of economic sanctions on Russia, chill in relations with the EU and the unleashing of a new cold war, Russian economy is likely not to withstand such a tension.

We may conclude that Russia has won the battle in Georgia, however, it may lose the war on global level and get own economic and political system into a crisis the consequences of which are unpredictable.

Notes:

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(2) Petrov, V. L.: Geopolitika Rossii. Vozrozhdenije ili gibel'. Moskva, Veche 2003, p. 23.

(3) Will, [George F.](#): Putin's new Evil Empire. 12th August, 2008.

http://www.pittsburghlive.com/x/pittsburghtrib/opinion/columnists/will/s_582284.html

(4) Priznanie nezavisimosti Abchazii i Juzhnoj Osetii bylo by narusheniem mezhdunarodnogo zakona. Rossijskaja gazeta, 26th August, 2008.

<http://www.rg.ru/2008/08/26/zakon-anons.html>



(5) Vystuplenie prezidenta Rossii Vladimira Putina na Miunchenskoj konferencii po voprosam politiki bezopasnosti 10 fevralia 2007 g.
<http://www.izvestia.ru/politic/article3101055/>

(6) Six Die in S.Ossetia Shootout. Civil Georgia, Tbilisi, 2nd August, 2008.
<http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=18871>

(7) Six Die in S.Ossetia Shootout. Civil Georgia, Tbilisi, 2nd August, 2008.
<http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=18871>

(8) Georgia Decided to Restore Constitutional Order in S.Ossetia' – MoD Official. Civil Georgia, Tbilisi, 8th August, 2008. <http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=18941>

(9) Ministr Gruzii: Cchivali bombili ne my, a russkie. Vzgliad, 22nd August, 2008.
<http://www.vz.ru/news/2008/8/22/199394.html>

(10) US backs Georgia against 'Russian aggression'.
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(11) Gruzija sovershila „sereznye oshibki.“ Glava MID Francii. Vzgliad, 17th August, 2008. <http://www.vz.ru/top/>

(12) Holbrooke, R. – Asmus, R.: Only Transatlantic Unity Can Stop This War.
http://www.atlantic-community.org/index/Open_Think_Tank_Article/Only_Transatlantic_Unity_Can_Stop_This_War



(13) Schmitt, G. - De Lorenzo, M.: [Georgia in NATO Will be the Best Revenge](#). The Wall Street Journal, 13th August, 2008.

(14) Merkel' osudila priznanie Rossiej nezavisimosti kavkazskih respublik. Gazeta.Ru, 26th August, 2008.
http://www.gazeta.ru/news/lenta/2008/08/26/n_1262891.shtml

(15) Vojna v Gruzii stoila Rossii polmilliarda dollarov. Obozrevatel.com, 20th August, 2008.
<http://www.obozrevatel.com/news/2008/8/20/254357.htm>

(16) Kudrin: za vremena vojny Rossija poteriala 7 mlrd. dollarov.
http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/russian/russia/newsid_7566000/7566577.stm

(17) Dlia vosstanovlenija Juzhnoj Osetii neobchodimo bolee 25 mlrd. rub.
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