

*In the Name of Allah*



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Object of Thesis:

**Geopolitical analysis of crisis in the Georgia and its  
implication on the relation with Islamic  
Republic of Iran**

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**Abstract:**

In our thesis we examine about geography and history of Georgia, Abkhazia, and South Ossetia and examine about the conflicts in Georgia from the beginning of the country's independence in 1991 until 2008 and the conflict resolution efforts provided by both domestic and international actors. In the thesis we explore the conflicts in all their complexity, study the domestic and external actors involved in Georgia, and their interests and involvement in the conflicts. Therefore, the main aim of the thesis is to find out implication of geopolitics on the crisis in the Georgia.

In this thesis we examined ethno-federalism, state-building and sub-state actors, Georgia's national project, Georgia's foreign policy and research addresses the international actors. On the international level, Tbilisi has moved from Russia as a center to USA and the EU, while on the domestic level Sukhumi and Tskhinvali were fighting to free themselves from Tbilisi as a center and moving towards the Russian center.

Why is it that Georgia has become to Russia's first target?

Firstly, not only Georgia proper but also its two breakaway regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia have common border with Russia, Secondly, both regions have been ruled by Russia's puppet regimes, and both of these separatist regimes have been used by Russia as an important base for preparing and implementing a military attack against Georgia, Thirdly, Georgia's Rose Revolution have been regarded by the Kremlin as a project of Washington; furthermore, Georgia's aspirations to NATO have broadly been considered an insult to Russia's national dignity.

August war had implication on the environment security of Islamic Republic of Iran:

Increase power of Russia in region that had positive effect on the position of Iran, Russian's blocks get power in region, this war show route of Iran is reliable for west, Diminution of presence the West in region for Short

time but this war had negative effect on the ethnic of Iran. After the August war, U.S against decision of NATO for increase relation with Russia helped to Georgia. It was predicted this tendency, decreased the relations between Iran and Georgia as well

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# Introduction:

## 1) Description of problem

Geopolitics is the art and practice of using political power over a given territory. Traditionally the terms have applied primarily to the impact of geography on politics but its usage has evolved over the past century to encompass a wider connotation. In academic circles, the study of geopolitics involves the analysis of geography history and social science with reference to spatial politics and patterns at various scales.

Rudolf Kjellen a Swedish political scientist coined the term at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The German geographer Friedrich Ratzel inspired Kjellen.

Geopolitical theory of Ratzel criticized as being too sweeping his interpretation of human history and geography too simple and mechanistic. In his analysis of the importance of mobility and the move from sea to rail transport, he failed to predict the revolutionary impact of air power.

After World War I, Kjellen's thoughts and term were picked up and extended by a number of scientists: in Germany by Karl Haushofer, Erich Obst, Herman Lautensach and Otto Maull, in France Vidal de la Blache and Camille, in England James Fairgrieve and Mackinder.

The concept of geopolitics initially gained attention through the work of Kazza spoons and Halford Mackinder. the Heartland theory (Mackinder theory) hypothesized they wouldn't need to use coastal or transoceanic transport to the basic notions of Mackinder's doctrines involve considering the geography of the Earth as being divided in to two sections, the world island or core, comprising Eurasia and Africa and the periphery, including the Americas the British isles and Oceania.

Following World War II, the study of geopolitics and by association political geography, was blackball by most universities. It started to

return from the 1980's onward, the study of critical geopolitics (Heske, 1997).

Since then, the word geopolitics has been applied to other theories, most notably the notion of the clash of civilizations by Samuel Huntington. In a peaceable world, neither sea-lanes nor surface transport are threatened hence all countries are effectively close enough to one another physically. It is in the realm of the political ideas, workings and cultures that there are differences, and the term has shifted more toward this arena, especially in its popular usage. Huntington's geopolitical model, especially the structures for North Africa and Eurasia, is largely derived from the intermediate region geopolitical model first formulated by Dimitri Kitsikis and published in 1978.

Geopolitics' traditionally indicates to relationship between political power and geographic space. Contemporary geopolitics believes: change with particular reference to territorial problems, issues of state sovereignty, political science and international law.

Today, geopolitics as a branch of political geography is the study of reciprocal relations between geography, political, power and the interactions arising from combination of them with each other.

The geographical scope of Central Asia and the Caucasus after the collapse of the Soviet Union has retained the elements of competition and bargaining between the United States and Russia. The most important reason for this trend is that after losing Eastern Europe and other geostrategic areas, the Russians insist upon maintaining Central Asia and the Caucasus as their only zone of influence (Vaezi, 2007).

The collapse of the Soviet Union has changed this situation dramatically, putting the newly independent states of Central Asia and the Caucasus firmly into geopolitical calculations. This is both because it was discovered that some of them sit on vast natural resources, notably oil and

gas, and because some of them were immediately engulfed in what was described as ethnic conflicts. Even in those newly independent states that so far have avoided unrest and conflicts, the competition between various outside powers for influence, which duped as the return of the "Great Game", threatened widespread disagreements, hostility and possibly armed interventions. The fact that most of these people, in modern times, were not allow to handle their problems independently from Moscow and thus did not amass experience of self-governance made the situation more complex. As they started to define their geopolitical orientation, the outcome seemed to attract the interest of various regional and extra-regional countries, hence their attempts to influence that outcome. Moreover, while Russia's power and influence weakened, the newly independent states of Central Asia and the Caucasus have taken different roads toward national consolidation, and regional economic and political alliances, thereby raising international security and policy issues that did not exist before the fall of Soviet power (Aydin, 1999:2).

Georgia is a country in South the Caucasus region of Eurasia. The independence of Georgia was restoring in 1991. Like many post-communist countries, Georgia suffered from civil unrest during the 1990s. Gamsakhurdia (first president of independent Georgia) stoked Georgian nationalism and vowed to assert Tbilisi's authority over region such as Abkhazia and South Ossetia that had been classify as autonomous oblasts under Soviet Union the country became embroiled in a bitter civil war, which lasted almost until 1995.

In 1995, Shevardnadze was officially elect as president of Georgia. At the same time simmering disputes within two regions of Georgia Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Between local separatists and the majority Georgian population, erupted into widespread some pockets of territory. Shevardnadze deposed by the Rose Revolution of November 2003.

Mikhail Saakashvili, Zurab Zhvania, and Nino Burjanadze led the revolution. Saakashvili was elected as president of Georgia in 2004. The outcome was the outset of a new period of reforms and liberalization under the guidance of a new democratically elected pro-western government. Georgia is currently working to become a full member of NATO. Moscow sees this expansion of western influence into Eastern Europe and certain former Soviet republics as aggressive moves to limit and weaken Russia.

In August 2008, the situation deteriorated and the conflict, which was an intra-state affair escalated to an inter-state war, involving not only domestic actors in Georgia but also directly an external actor – the Russian Federation. This so-called five-day war completed with the defeat of Georgia, where the two secessionist entities declared their independence, which was later recognized by Russia. This conflict put Georgia in the spotlight of the international community. Despite the fact that the country suffered from the earlier conflicts, the August 2008 events have shed more attention of the international community to Georgia and the conflict resolution. One can ask why all of a sudden Georgia became an object of such intense interest from the international community. The explanation is that Georgia matters on the world scene. The geographical position of the country is one of the reasons for that. Not only Georgia lies in a region connecting the East and West, Europe and Middle East, but also the country situated on the transport routes of the natural resources of the Caspian Sea region. Georgia as such does not have the rich resources of gas and oil, however, its position is strategically important, since it is a wish of the international oil and gas companies to use the country as a transport route for the natural resources exploited from the region. It was a priority of these companies to find routes that lay outside the borders of Russia and Iran.

The interests of the international actors are associated not only to the natural resources, which are transport through Georgia, but also related to the security and international relations issues. Russia as the major security actor in the region has interests related to national security as well as economic and political interest. As for the EU, Georgia is a direct neighbor by sea, and if Turkey joins the EU, Georgia will be the direct EU neighbor by land. USA has interests in the country related to security and economic and political issues. There is a completely political play between the actors adding up to the complexity around Georgia and its conflicts. Moreover, Georgia, with its diversity and existence of numerous minority groups and soviet legacy, is an interesting country to study in itself (Nyamaa and Munteanu, 2009:3).

Most of Georgia people are Christian and it does not have any common borders with Iran. The internal conflicts of this country and the possible developing conflicts in the northern of Caucasus and besides the position of this country in the central relations between Iran and Black Sea, Ukraine and Russia are not considered. New government of Georgia has deep ideological contraries with Islamic Republic of Iran; While Saakashvili rolled the government because the western countries supported him. Hence these elements were not in the interest of Iran including to try to join NATO, to accompany in the tube lines Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan and their tendencies toward Russia. It was in the summer of 2008 that played an important role in the security of Iran in this sense these factors were important including: the international position of Russia, the measure of the effects of west in the region, to form the political- structures in Caucasus.

Seems good relation between Islamic Republic of Iran and Russia had negative influence on relation Iran-Georgia especially after August war.

## **2) Key question**

1- Did the geopolitical factors in Georgia (ethnic factor and territory factor) have caused crisis in this country?

2- Was there any relation between Georgia's tendency to U.S. after Rose Revolution and emphasizing on joining the NATO by this country and conflict with Russia?

3- Did the war between Russia and Georgia has had any implication on the Iran especially on the relation with Georgia?

## **3) Hypothesis**

1- The geopolitical location of Georgia especially common frontier between Russia and separated region of Georgia has caused crisis in this country. Separatist conflicts are instruments for influence on the Georgia.

2- Tendency to the West, important position in transporting of natural resource of Caspian Sea and insisting of joining to NATO by Georgia and development of the organization to the east were one of the reasons of war between two countries.

3- The war between Russia and Georgia had implication on the environment security of Iran, position of Iran in Transport of oil and gas to Europe, object of ethnic in Iran and it seems reaction of Islamic Republic of Iran on separation of Abkhazia and South Ossetia had negative effect on relation between two countries.



#### **4) Review of literature**

Ethnic crisis in Georgia is not a new subject but review geopolitical crisis in Georgia (especially happening war between Russia and Georgia in August 2008 is a new subject. there are not many books and articles about this topic.

Johen f.Wright in chapter seven of his book as" Transcaucasia boundaries" explained about the geopolitics of Georgia, the evolution of Georgia's borders and ethnic crisis. He explained in this chapter that with the Soviet collapse and Russia's retreat, the focus of geopolitics has moved north to the Georgian/Russian federation frontier. During the Soviet period, the border merely defined administrative units but did not cut local people away from each other. The new situation of independent supposedly nation-states do (Wright, 1995).

"The dangers of reform: state building and national minorities in Georgia" (Julie A. George). This article argues that although conditions between the Georgian, South Ossetia and political leadership had hardened into seemingly intractable positions from 1991-2008, the manner and timing of August war were not certain. Analysts of the events, seeking to show Georgian culpability, argue that the personality and authoritarian style of Saakashvili led to a nationalistic policy that aimed to undermine the interests of Georgia's national minorities. Georgian national minority policy was not overtly chauvinistic and certainly not indicative of a full-scale crackdown on the secessionist territories particular centralizing characteristic of Georgia's state-building program, some of them necessary reforms after over a decade of political stagnation under Shevardnadze, contributed to the increasing tensions that were part of the lead up to the South Ossetia war (Georg, 2009).

Stepan Grigoryan in himself article as: "The future of Southern Caucasus in the light of new geopolitical reconfiguration ". Discuss about new geopolitical changes in Southern Caucasus.

"Geopolitics of crisis in central Asia and Caucasus".(Dr Mahmood Vaezi) Discusses about geopolitical importance of Central Asia and Caucasus and ethnic crisis in this region.

Mustafa Aydin in himself article as: " Geopolitics of Central Asia and Caucasus, continuity and change since the end of the cold war". Discusses about impact of collapse of the Soviet Union on the change of geopolitics in this region and enter of powers to Central Asia and Caucasus.

#### **5) Research objective**

The purpose of this dissertation is to analyze the geopolitical crisis in the Georgia and its implication on relation with Islamic Republic of Iran.

#### **6) Methodology**

Methodology in this thesis is correlation. By utilizing related researches academic works and library references.

#### **7) Key terms**

Geopolitics, crisis, Georgia, Russia, United State, NATO, ethnic crisis, Abkhazia, South Ossetia, relation with Islamic Republic of Iran

#### **8) Independent variable and dependent variable**

Geopolitics of Georgia is independent variable because it has impact on the crisis in Georgia. Crisis in Georgia and relation between Iran-Georgia is dependent variable.

## **9) Structure of the thesis**

This thesis contains introduction and five chapters. Introduction is about, which deals with the description of problem, key question, hypotheses, methodology, research purpose, independent and depend variable and key terms of the thesis.

Chapter one is titled as," Reviews geography and historical backgrounds of Georgia". This chapter is describes the geography situation and historical backgrounds of Georgia, south Ossetia and Abkhazia.

Chapter two is about the, "political development of Georgia after collapse of the Soviet Union". This chapter studies about the Georgia, in the years after collapse of the Soviet Union including: president Shevardnadze period, Rose Revolution and president Saakashvili period.

Chapter three is titled as; "geopolitical factors in crisis of Georgia". This chapter discusses about that Georgia's northern border with Russia is longer border and it have impact on the Russia's goals in support of South Ossetia and Abkhazia.(territory factor) this chapter also discusses about ethnic groups and impact them on the crisis in the Georgia.(ethnic factor)

Chapter four is about, "Georgia and tension between Russia and west". This chapter studies about Georgia's tendency to join NATO and threatening Russia's national security, this chapter also discusses about the Russia's inclination for the control of energy and Georgia's geopolitical role in decrease the control of energy by Russia and tension between U.S. –Russia.

The last chapter is titled as, "implication of crisis in the Georgia on the Islamic Republic of Iran especially on the relation with Georgia". This chapter studies about relation between Iran and Georgia after collapse

of the Soviet Union and impact the war of August 2008 on the Iran and relation with Georgia and final is conclusion