

The Role of US Republican Presidents George W. Bush and Donald Trump in Building Democracy and Strengthening Defense and Security Capabilities in Georgia - The analysis of Georgian Experts' Opinion

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Abstract: *The following paper aims to examine the US foreign policy towards Georgia during the two Republican presidents of the United States – George W. Bush and Donald Trump from 2000 till present. The United States support of Georgia's independence and territorial integrity is bipartisan and remains unchanged across the decades. The Republican presidents' role in building democracy and strengthening defence and security capabilities is noteworthy. At present, the cooperation between two countries is developing in different areas and at different levels, including mutual security and counterterrorism interests which aim to provide Georgia with bilateral security assistance. The research is based on primary and secondary data published both in English and Georgian languages. The opinion of Georgian politicians, professors, and experts of international relations and American Studies have been interviewed to analyze the role of US assistance from the point of view of Georgian scholars. In conclusion the article states that Georgian experts fully recognize the importance of US bipartisan political support, and in particular the role of Republican presidents George Bush and Donald Trump support in the process of integration into Euro-Atlantic institutions, in strengthening Democracy and defense capabilities of Georgia.*

Keywords: The US - Georgia strategic partnership, Charters of Partnership of 2009 and of 2019, defense and security, integration into NATO, Obama, Trump

1. Introduction

The US – Georgia relations starts from the early 1990s, when after the collapse of Soviet Union the country gained independence. The United States established the diplomatic relations with Georgia and offered political support which played a crucial role in self-determination of newly established sovereign country and in building democracy. Political relationship developed into a reliable partnership codified in the 2009 *U.S.-Georgia Charter on Strategic Partnership* which was re-defined in 2019. The Charter creates solid basis for long-term and fruitful cooperation. Defense and security cooperation between the two countries began to strengthen when Georgia became a US partner in combating terrorism in September 2001.

For 25 years, Georgia has made impressive progress, developing democratic state institutions, fighting against corruption and enhancing country's defense and security systems. The United States support of Georgia's territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders is bipartisan and it does not recognize the Abkhazia and South Ossetia regions of Georgia, currently occupied by Russia, as independent states. Though the US foreign policy vector has not been changed significantly, some differences have been identified between the policies and approaches towards Georgia accomplished by Democrat and Republican

presidents. The article focuses on country's progress made during Republican presidents.

2. Problem Definition

Since Georgia gained independence in 1991, the country's sovereignty was challenged a few times; breakaway territories, military conflicts with Russian Federation, fragile democracy, political instability, lack of reliable partners, little support from international community, and most importantly, inadequately developed defense and security capabilities. The United States supported independence of a young democratic country and a 25-year partnership has turned out to be beneficial for the both countries. The goal of the present paper is to recognize and assess the role of the Republican Presidents G.W. Bush and D. Trump in strengthening democracy and building the foundation for security of its statehood. Moreover, the article suggests Georgian experts' viewpoint in regards with the above stated problem and analyzes the results of the interviews.

3. Research & Methodology

The current article is constructed on qualitative research methodology since it offers analysis of qualitative data. Primary data were collected through qualitative interviews

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during the period January – March, 2020. Georgian experts were interviewed to discover their attitudes and point of view in regards with the US role and function in building democracy and strengthening defense and security capabilities in Georgia. Total number of interviewees was – 16, out who were: experts of international relations, lecturers, professors, and MA and PhD students of American Studies Program at IBSU. The respondents belong to three different age groups: a. 20-35 – 4 respondents; b. 36 -50 – 6; and c. 51 and more – 6.

Semi-structured type of interviews conducted face-to-face in academic settings provided interesting source of information; also, some respondents answered the questions and returned it with the comments by mail; Duration of the interview varied from 30 – to 60 minutes. The interviews included 17 close as well as open questions; the respondents were asked to provide some examples, arguments and possible reasons for their beliefs in regards with all seventeen questions. The comments provided by the respondents made their viewpoint more credible and authentic.

The article heavily relies on official documents released by Georgian and American Governments, such as U.S.-Georgia Charter on Strategic Partnership 2009 and another, a revised one - Charter of Partnership of 2019, strategic concepts, the documents related to NATO programs and projects, partnership and action plans. Official sites of the US Embassy in Tbilisi; Information from the sites of the US Congress and Ministry of Defense of Georgia are most frequently addressed in the research.

4. Results & Discussion

4.1. The relationships between the US and Georgia during the Presidency of George W. Bush

Political, economic and strategic assistance between the two countries was intensified during the presidency of Republican President George W. Bush who, in close cooperation with Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili (2003-2012), started a new era in the history of the two countries' relations.

The Republican President, George W. Bush during his first term of presidency was mostly concentrated on the war against the terrorism that was especially provoked by the 9/11. In September 2002, the Bush administration announced that the United States would preemptively use military force if necessary to prevent threats to its national security by terrorists or "rogue states", especially any that possessed weapons of mass destruction (Biography.com, 2018)¹. In the same year, the United States initiated the *Georgia Train and Equip Program (GTEP)* which provided Georgia's security services with assistance in securing internal terrorism threats.

In 2004, George W. Bush ran for re-election. Despite the fact that the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan were not going well, and his efforts in Social Security reform had met with

great resistance, Bush's political core remained supportive for international area.

In regards with Georgia, Bush was the supporter of its independence and territorial integrity; He was actively involved in Georgia's internal affairs, building democratic institutions and developing civil society. The President George W. Bush's visit to Tbilisi, capital of Georgia, on May 10, 2005 underlines the concept of support and active interest of conflict resolution in Georgia. President Bush said: *"The Rose Revolution was a powerful moment in modern history. It not only inspired the people of Georgia; it inspired others around the world that want to live in a free society"* (Daniel, 2005)².

GTEP evolved into the *Georgian Sustainment and Stability Programs (SSOP and SSOP II)*, launched in January In 2005, which trained and equipped Georgian forces and command staff for peace support operations in Iraq. GSSOP was a security assistance program designed to create an increased capability in the Georgian military to support Operation Iraqi Freedom Stability missions. The Program was also designed to help solidify the progress made during the *Georgia Train and Equip Program of 2002–2004* and continue to assist in the implementation of western standards in the Georgian armed forces. The first phase of the program (GSSOP-I) lasted about 18 months and cost approximately \$60 million. GSSOP trained the Georgian contingent participating in coalition operations in Iraq. Partnership with the Georgia (U.S.) National Guard, visits by the Sixth Fleet and the Coast Guard to Georgia, and the Bilateral Working Group on Defense and Military Cooperation are also important components of American security relationship with Georgia (Ministry of Defence of Georgia, n.d.)³.

Top priority of President Saakashvili's new government was integration into the Euro-Atlantic structures; but the steps made towards NATO membership caused serious problems with Russia. While Russia strongly opposed Georgia's NATO aspiration, the United States actively supported Georgia's full integration into the Alliance. In 2008, before the NATO Bucharest Summit, President George W. Bush once again expressed his full support for Georgia. He said: *"The Bucharest summit is coming up. Georgia's aspirations will be decided at the Bucharest Summit," "MAP, of course, is not membership. MAP is a process that will enable NATO members to be comfortable with their country eventually joining. I believe that NATO benefits with a Georgian membership. I believe Georgia benefits from being a part of NATO"* (Bush Gives 'Unwavering Support' to Georgia NATO Drive, 2008)⁴. In 2008, the last year of Bush's presidency, Georgian peoples' expectations in regards with NATO 2008 Bucharest Summit were not fulfilled as NATO members did not support giving to Georgia Membership Action Plan (MAP), instead Georgia was declared as an Aspirant country.

In August of the same year, the War between Georgia and Russia in South Ossetia broke out. War consequences made the United States to become the International peace supporter in Georgia. Bush urged Russia to sign the EU-

mediated Ceasefire Agreement, otherwise Russia would "jeopardise" its standing with the West. Although the Bush administration considered a military response to defend Georgia, it decided against it so as not to provoke a conflict with Russia (Hider, 2008)⁵. Instead, the US sent clear messages to Russia in support of Georgia and encouraged the population by sending humanitarian aid on military aircraft. Occupation of Georgian territories significantly worsened Georgia's security environment. Support from the United States on the issue of the de-occupation of our territories was very important for Georgia. In September 2008, then-Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice announced a total aid package **worth at least \$1 billion in aid** provided after the 2008 Russian aggression. Total US assistance to Georgia for 2008-2009 amounted to \$1.04 billion, which included \$250 million in direct budgetary support and an additional \$100 million in MCC funds (agenda.ge, n.d.)⁶. The financial aid and moral support extended by American people was especially significant Georgia during the period of heavy losses. The Bush administration also imposed sanctions on Russia, which were revoked by the Obama administration in May 2010.

By the end of the presidential term of George W. Bush, the relations between two countries were codified in the **2009 U.S.-Georgia Charter on Strategic Partnership** signed by then U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Georgia Grigol Vashadze in Washington DC, on January 9, just eleven days before Barack Obama came to office (Mason, 2012)⁷.

After the August 2008 War between Georgia and Russia in South Ossetia, the conflict became even "more frozen" and the role of the U.S. in it became even more insignificant. The United States during the Democrat president Barak Obama never presented strong claims to Russia about the annexed territories, and applied rather flexible diplomacy.

The U.S.-Georgia **Strategic Partnership Commission** held on June 22, 2009, comprised four bilateral working groups on priority areas identified in the Charter, such as: democracy; defense and security; economy, trade, and energy issues; also people-to-people diplomacy and cultural exchange. In addition to holding a high-level plenary session of the Commission each year, senior-level U.S. and Georgian policymakers lead yearly meetings of each working group to review commitments, update activities, and establish future objectives. Since signing of the Charter, the United States and Georgia have strengthened their cooperation based on U.S. support for Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and its commitment to promote democratic and economic reforms (U.S. Department of State, 2017)⁸. The U.S. had become the major international guarantor of Georgia's sovereignty. This was a clear signal for the world and primarily for Russia that Georgia was no more alone, his allies were the EU and the United States.

One of the key aspects of U.S. – Georgia relations is that it assists the country's integration into Euro-Atlantic institutions. Both Georgia and the United States are members of a number of international organizations, including the United Nations, Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe,

International Monetary Fund, World Bank, and World Trade Organization. Georgia also is a participant in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's (NATO) Partnership for Peace program. This is one of the opportunities for US and Georgia to cooperate and sustain each-others interests (Commission, 2017)⁹.

It is important to emphasize that the USA geopolitical character of the concern is revealed in securing of transportation links and the energy sector. The strategic value is straightforward: the country is a vital energy-transport corridor for oil and gas linking Europe and the Caspian Sea.

America found a strategic partner in the face of Georgia which supports its operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. Georgia is important for America both as a reliable partner and as a "beacon of democracy in the Region". The importance of strategic partnership is strengthened because of its "sovereignty and democracy, energy and trade, and security" (S.E. Cornell, N. Nilson)¹⁰. America is engaged in supporting counter-terrorism in Georgia, guaranteeing the stability of the state, and a secure transportation of resources from the Caspian region to international markets. Therefore, the 43rd Republican President was one of the first who gave to Georgia huge political and economic support.

The Congressional Research Service Report cites Georgia as a leading recipient of US foreign and military aid in Europe and Eurasia. In the 1990s (1992-2000), the US government provided over **\$860 million in total aid to Georgia** (\$96 million a year on average). The report reads that from 2001 to 2007, total aid to Georgia amounted to over \$945 million (\$135 million a year, on average). In 2005, Georgia also was awarded an initial five-year (2006-2011) \$295 million grant from the **US. Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC)** for road, pipeline, and municipal infrastructure rehabilitation, as well as for agribusiness development" (agenda.ge, n.d.)¹¹.

The US was interested in supporting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia, underpinning political developments, safeguarding democratization process, strengthening economic mechanisms and infrastructure and developing the East-West energy corridor and transportation processes of the Caspian resources between Europe and Asia.

4.2. The relationships between the US and Georgia during the President Donald Trump

On January 20, 2017, the New York businessman and former reality television star Donald Trump was sworn in as the 45th president of the United States. After the election of Donald Trump in the White House, Georgian leaders expressed hope that relations between the United States and Georgia would strengthen and reach higher point.

Undeniably, political and economic relations between two countries have been intensified for the last three years, and

Trump administration shows greater interest towards Georgia and extends support. *Georgia Support Act H.R. 598* passed by the House on October 22, 2019 - the legislation which solidifies the US support for Georgia's sovereignty and security once again testifies the enhanced interest between two countries.

In the first half of 2016, *Georgia Defense Readiness Program (GDRP)* was established and approved. GDRP consists of two simultaneous, complementary, program elements – GDRP-Training (GDRP-T), and GDRP-Institutional (GDRP-I). GDRP-I is an ongoing effort. In parallel of the GDRP, Georgia is developing an integrated live, virtual, and constructive *Combat Training Center* that provides country with organic, self-sustaining capacity to train and evaluate units.

As one of the main cooperation mechanisms between two countries, the *Memorandum on Deepening the Defense and Security Partnership* was signed On July 6, 2016, by then-U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry and then-Georgian Prime Minister Giorgi Kvirikashvili. Based on this, on December 6, 2016, Georgia and the U.S. signed a multi-year (3 years) framework agreement on security cooperation for 2016-2019. The document signaled a new level in the U.S.-Georgia defense and security cooperation by improving the bilateral planning processes from short to midterm and concentrating efforts on developing Georgia's Armed Forces combat readiness and self-sustaining institutional systems (Ministry of Defence of Georgia, n.d.)¹².

On May 17, 2017, Donald trump congratulated Giorgi Margvelashvili, then President of Georgia with the 25th Anniversary of Georgia-US diplomatic relations and once again reaffirmed that he supported Georgia's independence and territorial integrity, and that the two countries would support each-other to resist any instabilities in the region. The main message was clear – the US continues to be a reliable strategic partner, and the same is expected from Georgia – to be a steadfast supporter of peace and democracy in the region (Commersant, 2019)¹³.

On March 15, 2016, U.S Secretary of State John Kerry met Georgia's Foreign Minister Mr. Mikheil Janelidze. Mr. Kerry expressed the United States' support for Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity, as well Georgia's Euro-Atlantic aspirations. During the same period, May 8, 2017, then Prime Minister, Giorgi Kvirikashvili had an official visit in Washington (Invited by M Pence, US Vice President) during which Donald Trump invited him to his Oval Room for a meeting which was not on the agenda. The political analysts and critics evaluated the President's initiative as a message sent to Moscow telling about the importance of the relationship between the two countries. "It is not accidental that on May 8, 2017, President Trump Invited Georgian Prime Minister in the Oval Cabinet if we consider the fact on a broader context," (Chitadze) - says Dr. Nika Chitadze, Professor of International Black Sea University.

A new Regulation was signed in support of Georgia by the US President who says that the United States shall not

communicate with the countries which support independence of occupied territories of Georgia. G. Kvirikashvili, who had a meeting with Vice President Mike Pence to discuss further strategic plans of the two partner countries, in his interview said that the meeting was very important and the participants discussed different directions of cooperation, such as, defense and security, culture and education, support in development of democratic institutions and intensifying economic assistance (Commersant, 2019)¹⁴. In August, 2017, as Mamuka Bakhtadze then Prime Minister of Georgia declared, Georgia got unprecedented support from the President Donald Trump as he signed the Authorization of the *US National Defense Act*. The document features Georgia as a strategic partner and confirms its support extended towards Georgian national interests (also at regional level), security and sustainable development, as well as the perspectives of Georgia becoming a NATO member (Congress , 2017)¹⁵.

In February 2018, President of Georgia Giorgi Margvelashvili hosted one of the most influential academic organizations in the US - *Heritage Foundation Douglas and Sarah Allison Center for Foreign Policy*, Director Luke Coffey. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss current Georgia - US relations, NATO-Georgia relations and the US role in supporting Georgia in intensification of integration process into the Alliance. The 2016 Index of Economic Freedom released by Washington-based Heritage Foundation says that despite global and regional challenges, Georgia's economy has demonstrated "considerable resilience". It also highlighted Georgia's pursuit of greater economic freedom, reinforced by relative political stability, and had made its entrepreneurial environment "one of the best in the region". "It is in America's national interest to deepen the bilateral relationship with Georgia, help the Georgians improve their military capabilities, and keep Georgia on the path to NATO membership" (The Heritage Foundation, 2018)¹⁶. The recent report of The Heritage Foundation says that 2018 is an important year for the US-NATO-Georgian relationship, not only because it marks the 10th anniversary of Russia's military aggression against Georgia, but also because it marks the 10th anniversary of NATO's promise to Georgia of eventual membership in the Alliance during the Bucharest Summit.

Giving some of the main reasons as to why Georgia is important to the US, the report says: Georgia is a proven and dependable U.S. ally in places like Iraq and Afghanistan; Georgia's strategic location makes it important for the U.S. geopolitical objectives in the Eurasian region; and Georgia's journey to democracy is an example for the region. The author of the report believes that Georgians have proved themselves as reliable US allies and gallant in combat and that they are undertaking a defense transformation program and investing in their military in a way far exceeding NATO's standard (The Heritage Foundation, 2018)¹⁷.

In August 2017, U.S. Vice President Mike Pence told troops participating in the Noble Partner 2017 exercise that the Trump Administration "stand[s] by the 2008 NATO Bucharest statement, which made it clear that Georgia will

one day become a member of NATO.” At a press conference after the July 2018 NATO summit in Brussels, President Trump said that “at a certain point [Georgia will] have a chance” to join NATO, if not right now.”

In 2017, the U.S.–Georgia *General Security of Information Agreement (GSOIA)* marked a major milestone in security cooperation between the United States and Georgia.” This agreement improves intelligence services between the two countries and opens the door for future agreements on security cooperation and intelligence sharing. So far, the U.S.–Georgian relationship has thrived under the Trump Administration. Vice President Mike Pence made an early visit to Georgia in the summer of 2017, which was viewed as a major success. Importantly, he referred to the Russian military presence in the Tskhinvali region and Abkhazia as an “occupation.” In November 2017, the U.S. announced about two very important steps which will take the U.S.–Georgian defense relationship to another level. First, the **U.S. announced a historic sale of Javelin anti-tank missiles to Georgia**. The total package includes 410 missiles and 72 launchers. The Georgian government tried for several years during the Obama Administration to get Javelins from the U.S. but without success. Second, the U.S. agreed at the same time to refocused military cooperation on improving the territorial defense capabilities of the Georgian Armed Forces—a stark change from the years of only training Georgians for counterinsurgency operations in Afghanistan.

The Heritage Foundation Report raised a live interest among wide circles of Georgian society because it dealt with different aspects of Georgia- US relations, such as, historical development, Georgian achievements on the way to building democracy and sustainable economy, Russian factor, “borderization” problem, “creeping annexation” in which Russia has taken additional territory from Georgia (Coffey, 2018)¹⁸. Moreover, it was the first time when a clear message came from our partner country regarding our possible NATO membership. The authors of the document named some key political measures which the government of Georgia has to fulfill to support its path to full NATO membership. “The Georgian government should privately acknowledge to NATO members that it is willing to join the alliance without the occupied regions of Abkhazia or the Tskhinvali region falling under the protection of article 5 until the occupation is resolved peacefully” (Coffey, 2018)¹⁹. This is a realistic and reasonable way to admit Georgia into NATO and should not be viewed as the Georgian government, the U.S., or NATO changing its policy on Georgia’s territorial integrity (which includes Abkhazia and Tskhinvali region). The proposal was not accepted without criticism; Georgian society turned out to be unanimous in their aspiration to join NATO, though, not in exchange of historical regions of Georgia. Following these measures would also remove the issue of NATO membership from domestic party politics and make NATO membership a national cause rising above politics.

The year 2018 offers the U.S. an opportunity to deepen its relationship with Tbilisi, reaffirm NATO’s commitment to Georgian membership, strengthen the NATO–Georgian

relationship, boost Georgia’s NATO integration process, and enhance Georgia’s defensive capabilities. In the long run, this would bring more stability to the South Caucasus and Black Sea regions, which is in America’s national interest (Coffey, 2018)²⁰.

The President Trump’s administration attitude, visits of high rank officials, invitation of Georgian government representatives to Washington, and financial support extended towards our country once again confirms that the relationship between two countries are now developing fast based on mutual understanding. Trump administration continues the policy the US has had for more than 20 years. On the 10-year anniversary of *United States-Georgia Charter on Strategic Partnership was signed in 2019*. The two countries recognize the necessity to strengthen their relationship in the fields of defense and security, economic, trade, and energy cooperation, democratic governance, people-to-people diplomacy and cultural exchanges. Joint Declaration on the U.S.-Georgia Strategic Partnership consists of preamble and five sections. In Section I, there is a discussion of main principles of the Charter, where Democracy is the major source for political stability. Section II: Defense and Security Cooperation; Section III: Economic, Trade and Energy Cooperation; Section IV: Strengthening Democracy. Section V: Increasing People to People and Cultural Exchanges: During the visits in 2019 (June, 11 -12), the United States and Georgia stipulated their shared commitment to global, regional, and homeland security for both our countries (U.S. Embassy in Georgia, 2019)²¹.

In 2019, President Donald Trump signed National Defense Budget Act, the budget increases up to - 716 Billion US\$. The Act deals with Georgia’s aspiration to join NATO, and also includes military and financial assistance extended towards Georgia and Ukraine to increase their defense capabilities and enhance compatibility with NATO standards. In September 2019, Mamuka Bakhtadze then Prime Minister of Georgia visited the US, and the first meeting with John Bolton, President’s consultant in Security issues, was held in a White House. Also he had meetings with Secretary of State M. Pompeo, European leaders and UN representatives. As Davit Bakradze, Ambassador in the US says, Georgia received a strong support from Trump administration and important steps have been made to raise the relationship between two countries to a higher level.

Georgia annually participates in several U.S.-led military exercises. Notably, the two major U.S.-Georgia multinational exercises conducted in Georgia are *Agile Spirit (since 2011)* and *Nobel Partner (since 2015)*. The international exercises are becoming more and more in the center of attention by NATO and more countries participate, which further increases the experience essential to integration process of Georgian Armed Forces to NATO.

5. Analysis of the interview results

The analysis of the interviews reveal that the experts, politicians, students and lecturers all agree that the US

assistance to Georgia is crucial, instrumental and plays a decisive role in strengthening country's independence. Since the period when bilateral cooperation between the countries was established, Georgia has had a bi-partisan support from the US, but the Republican presidents made a significant contribution in building Georgia's self-defense and security capabilities – this opinion was shared by the majority of the interviewees. The main focus in the questionnaire was made on the following aspects of US-Georgia relations: Political support of the US towards Georgia; Support in building defense capabilities, democracy, in developing civil society and endorsing fair elections; Support to encourage the defense and security capabilities, and finally, the questions related to the US support in the process of integration Georgia into the Euro-Atlantic structures.

Almost all interviewees recognized very important political support extended by the Republican presidents – G.W. Bush and D. Trump. Though, they also gave due appreciation to the President Clinton and Obama's positions. *"George W. Bush was a key figure who intended to create democratic 'platzdarm' in post-Soviet countries, for ensuring some balance against Russia, but anyway, it was clearly supported by the strong will of Georgian people"* – the scholar of American Studies George Labadze argued. Very interesting is the answer of Roman Kavtaradze – Senior Representative, NATO, ACT, Norfolk, USA – *"During the G.W. Bush presidency, Georgia received unprecedented support from Bush's administration after the 'Rose Revolution' in Georgia and received financial, as well as military support with the GDRP, (Georgian Defense Readiness Program; also program: Retraining all Georgian Armed Forces to the NATO standards. Moreover, today we have the same support from the D. Trump administration, GDRP (Georgia Defense Readiness Program)."*

The next very important issue that the interviewees discuss is the US support for building democracy and integration in NATO structures. The former Georgian Ambassador to the US, A. Gegeshidze, thinks that Republican presidents almost equally supported Georgia politically: *"The Bush (Jr.) administration was very supportive of Georgia's accession to NATO."* Also, *"Because of the Georgia Readiness Program and the delivery of anti-tank systems, the Trump administration is distinguished."* The former ambassador declares. Professor Vasil Kacharava, the Head of American Studies Institute, argues that during the Republican presidents, *Georgia has had an unprecedented political and financial support which created solid basis for the country's sustainable development.* Some respondents explained the difference between the policies of the presidents referring to the policies of each political party. Professor V. Maisaia, thinks that *"Republican approach is more pragmatic and based in rational choices bases and Democrat one is more global and liberal on its orientation."* One of the key questions asks to what extent President Trump support Georgia's integration into NATO structures. The answers vary from "Strong" to "Weak" and each respondent gives explanation. e.g. Ana Mosashvili thinks Trump extended Strong support: *"The United States and Georgia have held annual joint military exercises in Georgia"*. Archil Gegeshidze: Strong support - *Because of the Georgia*

Readiness Program and the delivery of anti-tank systems, the Trump administration is distinguished. The respondents provided various reasons to support their responses, e.g. Georgia Support Act of 2019(H.R. 598); official meetings with Georgian Government representatives in White House, support in organizing military trainings and exercises in Georgia, support in joining Georgia into Euro-Atlantic structures, imposing sanctions on Russia, offering substantial financial support and extending support in cyber security; and recently raised problem of Black Sea security.

5.1. Figures & Tables

We asked the interviewees to evaluate the foreign policy of Republican Presidents George W. Bush and Donald Trump giving the following options: Strong, Moderate, Weak, No Answer.

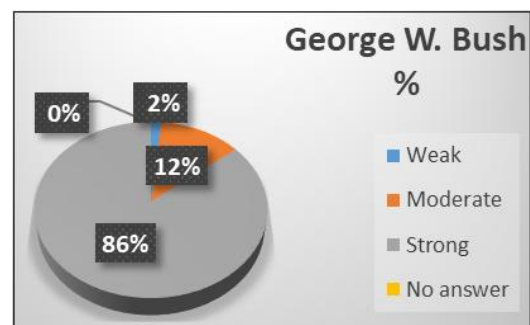


Figure 1: G.W. Bush's Foreign Policy toward Georgia

Table 1: G.W. Bush's Foreign Policy toward Georgia

Total: Bush	%
Weak	2
Moderate	13
Strong	86
No answer	0

According to the interview results (see figure 1) G.W. Bush's foreign policy toward Georgia, support in building democracy and security is evaluated as follow: 86% of interviewers declared that his support toward Georgia was strong; 12% - answered - moderate; 2% - weak; and no one answered that had no answer.

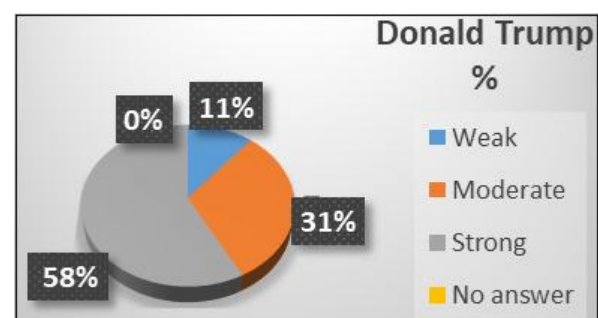


Figure 2: D. Trump's Foreign Policy toward Georgia.

Table 2: D. Trump's Foreign Policy toward Georgia

Total: Trump	%
Weak	11
Moderate	31
Strong	58
No answer	0

According the figure 2, we can see the evaluation of Donald Trump's political support to Georgia according the interview analyzes. As we can see, the results differ somehow: 58% of respondents answered that D. Trump's political support and encouragement in defense capabilities is strong; 31% - supports the idea that it is moderate; 11% answered that it is weak and no one had no answer on the questions.

6. Conclusion

The U.S.-Georgia military cooperation policy successfully developed by the Republican presidents G.W. Bush and Donald Trump has strengthened the self-defense capabilities of Georgia's Armed Forces and facilitated integration and interoperability with Euro-Atlantic institutions. The United States is committed to support educating, training, and exchanging operational and technical personnel to improve military effectiveness for self-defense and special operations warfare. Improving Georgian cybersecurity through expert collaboration, exchange, and participation in bilateral and multilateral training and events, the two countries intend to work together to counter terrorism and to combat the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) globally. According to the *Congressional Research Service Report, 2019*, Georgia has received \$4,348,400,000 in financial aid from the United States between 1992 and 2020, significant part of this sum was spent on strengthening self-defense and security (agenda.ge, 2019)²². Georgian people, whose noble aspiration is to maintain independence, territorial integrity, and build up democracy, fully recognize the value of support and assistance extended by the United States of America.

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