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*I.M. Nokhrin***ABKHAZ–GEORGIAN ETHNOPOLITICAL CONFLICT AS A COMPLEX CONFLICT AND PROSPECTS FOR ITS SETTLEMENT**

The paper addresses the issue of Abkhaz-Georgian ethno-political conflict treating it as not a single process but as the complex case that consists of several consecutive self-sufficient conflicts or sub-conflicts during which different parties had various goals and escalated the situation trying to achieve miscellaneous aims. Although each of these sub-conflicts are looking like historical phases of one conflict, each of them has its own logic and, therefore, requires to be analyzed separately. The first sub-conflict of 1991–1994 can be quite accurately explained from the structuralist perspective as an attempt of the Abkhaz to reconsider their status and break the discriminative social structures developed during imperial and Soviet rule. The second phase 1994–2008 was the period of nationalist mobilization and the new clashes and atrocities were the result of the Georgian and Abkhaz elites' intention to strengthen their legitimacy and power. Russia's role in this case fits well with the concept of "humanitarian intervention" and does not correspond to the Roger Brubaker's famous "triadic nexus" (1996). Finally, the last phase of conflict since 2008 can be hardly called an ethno-political conflict itself since peace and the military status quo were established after the war of 2008 which neither side can challenge. Therefore, after 2008, it is more appropriate to speak about the need of post-conflict reconciliation instead of Abkhaz-Georgian ethno-political conflict. However, none of the parties has taken steps towards this reconciliation yet because the settlement of the conflict is impossible while it continues to be used for nationalist mobilization.

Keywords: Abkhaz-Georgian conflict, ethno-political conflict, Abkhazia, Abkhazian nationalism, Georgian nationalism.

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Introduction

In 2021, researchers of nationalism and ethno-political conflicts are likely to witness the new evidences of the Abkhaz-Georgian conflict which, however, are expected not in the form of armed clashes but as a competition between the Abkhaz and Georgian versions of national history. It can be assumed that the first will celebrate the centenary of the independent republics of Abkhazia, which appeared on March 28, 1921. Accordingly, the second will most likely argue that it would be more correct to celebrate the centenary of the Georgian republic formed on February 25, 1921 and incorporated the Republic of Abkhazia on December 16, 1921. At the same time, these discussions will mark the 30th anniversary of one of the most difficult ethno-political conflicts in the territory of the former USSR, which today seems farther from resolution than ever in its entire history.

Thus, the bunch of question arises: what are the reasons that incite the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict, what are the prospects for resolving the conflict in the nearest future and what approach can adequately explain the emerging and development of this conflict all this time? In the paper below I am going to argue that the conflict is not a single process but consists of several consecutive and self-sufficient conflicts (sub-conflicts). In each of these sub-conflicts, the parties had different goals and escalated the situation to achieve their aims. Thus, different research approaches are required to understand the dynamics of the Abkhaz-Georgian conflict at different phases and its pervasive settlement is possible only after resolving the controversies of each phase.

Method

The Georgian-Abkhaz conflict is a phenomenon that can hardly be studied as something integral. Even the very definition of this conflict engenders a lot of difficulties. Starting from the history, the defining of the beginning of the conflict seems a very controversial question. The first answer that can be done is 1992 – the year when Abkhazia's independence from Georgia was proclaimed. However, violence between Abkhazians and Georgians could be observed much earlier, for instance, in 1989 in Sukhum, 16 people were killed during ethnic clashes [9. P. 66-81]. And even before that, throughout the Soviet period, relations between Georgians and Abkhazians remained extremely tense because Georgians enjoyed the privileges from the Soviet authorities while Abkhazians experienced discrimination. The difficulty also arises regarding to the current state of the issue. Although there has been no violence between the Georgian and Abkhaz sides since 2008, the Georgian authorities continue to consider Abkhazia as part of Georgia and do not negotiate with the Ab-

khaz government. This, however, does not prevent the Abkhaz authorities from functioning and ruling the country. Therefore, the question raises of whether the conflict can be considered inactive if no clashes have been observed for more than a decade. Or it ought to be considered active until one of the parties still perceives the situation as ongoing confrontation. However, in the latter case, the chronology of the conflict can stretch for several decades and the definition of the conflict can become even more vague. In addition to chronology, the typology of the conflict also causes many difficulties: should it be considered one of the cases of contemporary post-imperial nation-building, or the nationalist separatist movement, or an example of ethnic atrocities driven by local elites. Therefore, the method used in this article is a critical approach to the very concept of the Abkhaz-Georgian conflict, which is perceived not as an integral conflict but as a complex process – a series of conflicts (sub-conflicts) each of which developed according to its own logic. In contrast to the taking the Abkhaz-Georgian conflict as an integral issue, the study from the perspective of sub-conflicts allows to define the type, chronology, actors, driving forces and ideology of each phase more consistently. The division of a complex conflict into sub-conflicts also allows to reduce the contradictions that inevitably arise when different theoretical approaches are used as well as when the scale of the phenomenon under study is too broad.

“The collapse of imperial regime”: 1991–1994

The origin and beginning of the contemporary Abkhaz-Georgian conflict can be quite accurately explained from the structuralist approach, which offers an adequate understanding of the relationship between the practices of imperial governance and the premises of ethnopolitical conflicts. One of the prominent researchers of this school Richard Jenkins developed the concept of ‘categorization’ to analyze the process of creating the identity, establishing relations of power, consolidating social roles and behavior of individuals [12]. According to Jenkins, categorization was often used in the imperial practice of colonial administration in the context of the divide-and-rule principle, when the imperial authorities not only created group identities (sometimes ex nihilo) but also relied on some of these groups (usually the most dependent) in the administration. In the case of Abkhazia, the policy of the Russian Empire was a typical case of the Jenkins’ model. As soon as the military established full control over Abkhazia’s territory after the end of the Caucasian War in 1864, the Russian and Ottoman authorities agreed to displace the Muslim population of Abkhazia into the Ottoman Empire. As a result, the majority of the Abkhazian population were forced to leave their homes. Only 20,000 Abkhaz remained within the Russian Empire in 1881. Most of them lived in the mountainous part, while the richest and most fertile areas along the coast became uninhabited. In the 1880s, the imperial authorities initiated the settlement of the deserted coastal areas by people from Georgia who were considered more “civilized” and, most importantly, more loyal people because of their Christian faith. This is how the opposition between the empire-backed “Georgians” and “indigenous” Abkhazians developed in which the latter found themselves in the position of a discriminated minority.

During the Soviet period, the situation in this part of the Caucasus region was quite similar to the imperial practices. Although there is no agreement among researchers on whether the USSR can be considered an empire, it should be noted that Soviet nationalities policy in Abkhazia quite exactly fit the Jenkins’ model. Like the Russian empire, the Soviet authorities relied on their politics on the Georgian “ethnos” which they considered as the most “developed” and loyal. The irony of history is that categorization of Georgians created in the Russian Empire back in the 19th century was based on their belonging to the Christian religion (opposed to other Muslim peoples of the Caucasus, including the Abkhaz). And although the Bolsheviks officially declared themselves atheists, they continued this religiously based categorization. Continuing imperial practices, the Soviet authorities actively promoted the settlement of Abkhazia by Georgians and impeded the use of the Abkhaz language as well as discriminated Abkhazians in occupying public posts. Since the 1930s, a policy of “Georgianization” of Abkhazians has been carried out in the Georgian Republic: toponyms, names, and surnames and even local dishes (Sukhumi instead of Sukhum, “khachapuri” instead of “khachapur”) were renamed following the norms of the Georgian language. Finally, Abkhazians were required to study Georgian in schools.

It is not surprising, therefore, that with the collapse of the Soviet state, the Abkhaz got the intention to reconsider the discriminative status quo. As Posen aptly considers “The collapse of imperial regimes can be profitably viewed as a problem of ‘emerging anarchy’” [18. P. 84]. According to him, groups often use the situation of uncertainty to achieve a better position in the social structure or to get rid of restrictions, especially if they think that a “window of opportunity” has opened for action [18]. For Abkhazians, such a “win-

dow of opportunity” opened on in March of 1991 when the referendum on leaving the USSR was held in the Georgian Republic. Most of the population, mainly Russians and Abkhazians, boycotted this referendum, thereby demonstrating that they did not consider Abkhazia to be the part of independent Georgia. At the same time, preparations began for the election of the Supreme Council of Abkhazia – the legislative body that every Soviet republic had (although Abkhazia was not one of Soviet republics). The Supreme Council, chosen in September 1991, essentially became the highest government body, since the Soviet system of governance de facto no longer functioned (the USSR collapsed de jure in December 1991), and the Supreme Council of Georgia de facto did not have sovereignty on the territory of Abkhazia. The “window of opportunity” expanded in 1992 when the first president of the Georgian Republic, Zviad Gamsakhurdia was overthrown as a result of coup d'etat in Tbilisi. The Supreme Council of Abkhazia used the growing instability as a reason for the abolition of the Georgian constitution of 1978 and the restoration of the constitution of 1925, according to which Georgia was a federation and Abkhazia was one of its subjects. At the same time, the Supreme Council of Georgia restored the constitution of 1921, proclaimed Georgia a unitary state, and canceled the decision of Abkhazia’s Supreme Council. Moreover, even though the Supreme Council of Abkhazia demanded not independence but federalization (although some politicians were quite separatist), the Georgian authorities proclaimed the intention to fight Abkhazian “separatism”. Thus, in terms of the constructivist approach, the decision of the Georgian authorities to send troops to Abkhazia and initiate hostilities in August 1992 gives an eloquent example of group’s desire to maintain its dominant position. At the same time, an elitist approach can offer slightly different, but no less interesting explanation for the outbreak of armed conflict. As Fearon and Latin observed, ethnic leaders, can provoke inter-ethnic violence to increase their legitimacy and power [6]. In the context of the events in Abkhazia 1992, this approach seems to be very reasonable. The new Georgian president, Eduard Shevardnadze, undoubtedly needed to strengthen his legitimacy after the coup and positioned himself as a leader capable of uniting the country. Therefore, troops were brought into Abkhazia under the pretext of fighting supporters of the ousted president Gamsakhurdi – the decision that was done to demonstrate to Shevernadze's supporters his strength and rigidity. The complexity of the situation was that the arrival of Shevardnadze's troops in Sukhum meant the end of political life for the deputies of the Supreme Council of Abkhazia as well literally threatened their lives and therefore the latter were ready to do anything to prevent this scenario.

Finally, the political, and then the military conflict of 1991-1994 can be called an eloquent example of what Michael Mann called the “dark side of democracy” [16]. Deputies of the Supreme Council of Abkhazia, as well as the Georgian authorities, argued that they represented the interests of the people who chose them. Although the degree of democratic elections in Georgia and Abkhazia in the context of the collapse of the USSR is extremely difficult to assess (for example, residents of Abkhazia did not participate in the Georgian elections), it is obvious that the understanding of “the people” in Sukhum and Tbilisi was completely different. In the first case, it was the issue of “the Abkhazian people” which were about one-fifth of the population of Abkhazia (all Russian and Georgian population of Abkhazia were excluded from voters). In the second case, politicians spoke of “the Georgian people” in Georgia and, accordingly, there was no place for Abkhazians, Ossetians, Mengrels, Russians and other minorities. Thus, the conflict, in which about 8 thousand people died and 250 thousand became refugees on both sides, was perceived as a just struggle of “the people” for the right to rule “their” country and land.

The nationalist mobilization: 1994–2008

Even though the parties signed a ceasefire agreement and started the reconciliation of the return of refugees in 1994, the conflict was not settled. As Harff and Gurr reasonably prove “the extent and intensity of the resulting conflict depend upon the strategies followed by ethnic groups' leaders and those followed by governments” [8. P. 97-98]. In the case of Abkhazia in Georgia, leaders adopted a strategy of nationalist mobilization to increase their legitimacy and power. The core of this strategy was the construction of group solidarity by the image of a common enemy as a fundamental threat to the very existence of the nation and its future – a bitterly known and widespread policy in past and present, as Bailey demonstrated on wide historical and contemporary material [1]. Following this policy, the Supreme Council adopted the constitution of Abkhazia and proclaimed it an independent state in 1994. In the same year, the first president of Abkhazia, Vladislav Ardzinba, was elected and inaugurated. In public speeches, Abkhaz politicians constantly insisted that after the hostilities of 1992–1993 nothing can guarantee the safety of Abkhazians in Georgia. In argumentation, they pointed on the existence of numerous Georgian paramilitary units on the border with Georgia, which from time to time at-

tacked Abkhaz settlements and militia. The largest clash between the Georgian paramilitaries and the Abkhaz militia occurred in 1998, in which about 5,000 people took part on both sides. Abkhaz politicians immediately called this incident the second war for independence and initiated a referendum on independence from Georgia. It took place in 1999 and 97.7 % of the participants voted in favor.

It should be noted that the actions of the Georgian paramilitaries at this stage became one of the main reasons why the conflict was not resolved. Posen considers "The vulnerability of civilians makes it possible for small bands of fanatics to initiate conflict. Because they are small and fanatical, these bands are hard to control" [18. P. 89]. During the so-called Geneva negotiation process in 1994-2001 armed clashes on the border, frustrated the emerging consensus many times while representatives of the UN and Russia actively pushed Abkhazia and Georgia towards reconciliation. In 1995, the Georgian authorities were even ready to accept federalization according to the Constitution of Abkhazia of 1925. However, the Abkhaz side constantly suspected counterparts in hypocrisy since the constant raids of paramilitary gangs from Georgian territory could not take place without the knowledge or at least connivance of Tbilisi. This became especially evident in 2001 when a group of five hundred Chechen mercenaries freely passed about 400 km through Georgian territory and invaded Abkhazia from the Kodori Gorge. This incident marked the end of the Geneva negotiation process.

Nationalist mobilization by the image of a common enemy was also a strategy of the Georgian elites. But if the regime of Eduard Shevardnadze was distinguished by moderation and a certain inclination toward negotiations with minorities, then Mikhail Saakashvili, who came to power in 2003, was distinguished by extreme radicalism and right-wing populism. Saakashvili was not silent during the election campaign that he was going to restore Georgia's unity by force, which should have been the first step towards the implementation of the main part of his political program – Georgia's accession to the European Union and NATO (the master key to solving Georgia's economic and social problems, according to Saakashvili). However, in the case of Georgia, it is extremely difficult to consider, as some researchers do, that the involvement of international organizations in the ethno-political conflict positively influenced domestic politics towards ethnic minorities and helped to reduce the intensity of enmity. On the contrary, the idea of Posen seems to be much more adequate that "expectations about outside intervention will also affect preventive war calculations" [18. P. 91]. To a certain extent, the situation was close to the "quadratic nexus" and the Estonian scenario described by Smith [21]. Having received support from EU and NATO officials for his plans, Saakashvili decided that new Western allies would turn a blind eye to discrimination against minorities (as was the case in the Baltic states) and even a military operation in Abkhazia and Ossetia for the sake of involving Georgia in their sphere of geopolitical influence. However, as the 2008 war showed, Saakashvili was deeply mistaken: the geopolitical realities of the Baltic states of the 1990s did not work in the Caucasus of the 2000s. An important feature of the "quadratic nexus" in Georgia was the existence of an Abkhazian proto-state with an army and political institutions, which significantly distinguished Abkhaz from the disorganized Russian-speaking minority in the Baltic states. Another difference was in the positions of NATO and the EU. Their officials did not support the Georgian government for the beginning of the hostilities, thereby demonstrating that there is a difference between restricting the civil rights of part of the population on the model of the Baltic states and fighting against minorities and the UN peacekeepers, as happened in Georgia in 2008. Finally, trying to bring NATO into the Caucasus region, Saakashvili turned Russia into his worst enemy and made it a powerful patron for Abkhazia. At the same time, unlike the 1990s, Russia was deeply disappointed with the reluctance of the West to take into account its opinion (like it was in the case of Baltic states) and therefore was ready to use not only negotiations but a force in the conflict.

The role of Russia in the Abkhaz-Georgian conflict is worth special attention. Although Russia's participation in the 1st phase was not very significant, in the 2nd phase its involvement had crucial importance. At the same time, that was not the case of the Brubaker's "triadic nexus" [4]. According to Brubaker, an important aspect of the national question was central to its overall configuration in post-Soviet Eurasia: "the pervasive tension between (1) incipient national and nationalizing - states; (2) the national minorities in the new states; and (3) the external "homeland" states to which the minorities "belong" by ethnonational affiliation but not legal citizenship"[4. P. 44]. However, Georgia cannot be considered as a "nationalizing state", since it never had sovereignty over the territory of Abkhazia (if to talk about post-Soviet times) and, accordingly, could not even try to nationalize it. Also, Russia cannot be called the "external homeland" for the Abkhazians since the Russians were never perceived by the Abkhaz as a "kin people". On the contrary, as mentioned above, the Soviet authorities relied on Georgians to rule this part of Caucasus, and the Abkhazians

were discriminated for a long time by those whom they considered as Russian. Accordingly, in Russia, there was no noticeable Abkhaz diaspora capable to influence politics, and Russian politicians, as well as the population, did not consider the Abkhaz as a “kin people” like, for instance, the Russian-speaking minority in the Baltic states.

A more adequate understanding of Russia's position in the conflict can be provided by an analysis in the context of the problem of humanitarian intervention. As Paris accurately noticed, “in practice, however, it is virtually impossible to imagine a military intervention that is motivated solely by humanitarian considerations” [17. P. 572]. And this is true not only concerning the military but also to any other form of external interference in a conflict, including diplomatic mediation. Accordingly, in the 1990s, Russia was driven mainly by altruistic purpose to prevent mass atrocities and played an active role as an intermediary trying to bring the parties to an agreement. Although her motives were not limited solely to humanitarian considerations. Thereat Abkhazian separatism and de facto independence from Georgia looked like as extremely dangerous precedent in the context of Russia's struggle against Chechen separatism. Therefore, Russian officials advocated a ceasefire, the return of refugees and the settlement of the conflict by providing Abkhazia with broad autonomy, but with the preservation of the territorial integrity of Georgia. In the 2000s, the situation changed. The threat of NATO made Abkhazian separatism profitable for Moscow (since one of the conditions for admitting any country to NATO implies the absence of unresolved territorial disputes). Therefore, Russian diplomacy solidified with the point of view of Abkhaz politicians that only the separation of Abkhazia could be a guarantee against the repetition of a humanitarian catastrophe. As an argument, Moscow almost literally repeated the discourse of NATO's recent humanitarian intervention in Kosovo and the partition of Serbia. When Saakashvili's regime attacked UN peacekeepers in 2008 and attempted to capture Ossetia and Abkhazia, the Kremlin demonstrated that it considers itself “responsible to protect” and has, in the words of Mamdani [15], “the right to punish” as NATO has. As a result, there was no longer the Abkhaz-Georgian conflict but the Russian-Abkhaz-Georgian conflict after the Russian-Georgian war of 2008.

The frozen conflict: 2008-present

The Russian military operation in Georgia, despite the ambiguous assessment by the international community, had one indisputable positive consequence – there are no more ethnic hostilities, atrocities and tensions on the Abkhaz-Georgian border since 2008. The main question now is whether the status quo, i.e. the de facto partition of Georgia is an optimal solution worth recognizing by the international community. According to Kaufmann, world practice shows the effectiveness of the partition in resolving ethnic conflicts, especially “when all else fails” [13]. Furthermore, it does not matter if such a decision receives international recognition or not, the main thing is to reduce the sharpness of the so-called “security dilemma” and stop the war and violence. Sambanis also believes that reducing the level of militarization of the conflict zone is crucial for its resolution, and not less important that partition leads to the democratization of the resulting states [19]. Indeed, if such an approach worked with Taiwan, Northern Cyprus, and Kosovo, it can be applicable for Abkhazia. Moreover, as practice shows, the last 10 years have become the most peaceful time in the history of Abkhazia since the collapse of the USSR: the cities destroyed during the war were gradually being restored, tourists were coming back on the beaches, paramilitary gangs were no longer terrorizing people. And what is very important, Abkhaz nationalism is becoming less militarized and acquires the features of resource nationalism. Abkhazian politicians are talking less about the war and enemies, and more about the tourism and sea resources of the country that are presented as proof of its ability to independent existence. However, some researchers believe that partition as a method to resolve ethnic conflicts is fraught with rather negative consequences. Horowitz argues that the main possible problems of newborn states are “revenge” violence, as well as irredentism and continuous enmity with “parent” state on the international level [11]. But, on the contrary, in the Abkhazian case, no significant violence or discrimination against the Georgian and Russian minorities has been recorded during the last years. At the same time, about fifty thousand refugees returned to their homes and the process is going on. Finally, there is no alternative today to the independence of Abkhazia, since Georgian and Abkhaz officials have been not negotiated with each other since 2008, and relations between Russia and Georgia are still extremely tense, if not to say hostile.

The foregoing requires paying attention to the current position of the Georgian authorities. As Horowitz accurately noticed “relations between the secessionist state and rump state will be marked by tension and the treat of revanche” [10. P. 591], and this is true regarding the relationship between Abkhazia and Georgia. In 2019, Georgian authorities launched an “A Step to a Better Future” initiative that was supposed

to be a way to develop relationships between Georgia and Abkhazia. However, this document did not mention anything about post-conflict reconciliation, including such solutions as “truth-telling” [3] or co-called “truth commissions” [5]. Moreover, this document did not propose a way to post-conflict institution building, such as the development of consociationalism [22] or power-sharing practices [20], which are considered by scholars as effective ways to resolve ethnic conflicts. The focus of the "Initiative" set on winning the sympathy of the Abkhazian population by simplifying border crossing rules for people and goods, as well as providing free higher education for Abkhazians in Georgia. Without denying the value of such measures per se, it is extremely difficult to believe that they will lead to any changes, especially given that the authors of the “Initiative” are reasoning like there was no conflict lasting three decades as well as they say nothing about establishing a dialogue with Abkhaz leaders and Russia like the former do not exist at all and the latter do not has a military base at Gudauta with 4,000 soldiers, heavy weapons and air defense. Therefore, it is very likely that the “Initiative” will not have significant consequences in the context of the Abkhaz-Georgian relations. Moreover, this document itself can be considered as a continuation of the nationalist mobilization strategy since it was addressed rather to the people of Georgia and intended to create the facade of negotiations with the Abkhaz and at the same time (when it becomes obvious that the Abkhaz did not have any interest in the initiative) again blame the Abkhaz for unwillingness to negotiate.

Discussion of the proposed analysis

Before proceeding to the conclusion, it is worth mentioning the limitations of the proposed case study. The Abkhaz-Georgian conflict is considered in this paper mainly from the standpoint of the so-called structuralist and elitist approach [14]. Moreover, the analysis is limited to the macro-level and scrutinizes the social structures that have developed during long-term processes. Accordingly, politicians and organized groups (the Supreme Council of Abkhazia, gangs of Georgian paramilitaries, etc.) were taken as key agents of the conflict. For this reason, the essay does not say anything about the motivation and mindset of individuals and the role of the masses in the development of the conflict which requires a particular study. Furthermore, the cultural content of ethnic identity (symbols, values, beliefs), as well as the process of constructing cultural boundaries, which Bart considered a determining factor in the formation of ethnic groups, are not subjected to analysis [2]. These questions could be answered from the theory of rational choice or the post-structuralist approach. However, the involvement of different, sometimes conflicting theories, built on different epistemological principles, could lead to a loss of coherence of the analysis and contradictory and too general conclusions. To say by words of Malešević “the problem is not that we have no adequate research tools and prescriptions – the problem is that we have too many” [14. P. 182). For this reason, I decided to choose a limited number of common concepts that promised to give interesting results. However, this does not mean that my conclusions are the only ones that can be obtained in this case.

Conclusion

Two very different centennials can be celebrated in 2021. One of them is the anniversary of independent Abkhazia. Another is the centennial of the entry of Abkhazia into Georgia and the formation of a common state. From today's point of view, the prospects for the former seem much more real than the latter. Over the past three decades, the Abkhaz-Georgian conflict went through 3 phases, which ensured its triple complication. Therefore, the settlement of the conflict requires the resolving of the three main problems in the reverse order of their occurrence. First, if Georgia can develop better relations with Russia, demonstrating a desire for peaceful good neighborliness, this will destroy the unusual "triadic nexus" of this conflict, making the situation in the Caucasus less hostile. This requires from the Georgian authorities to abandon the idea of joining NATO, which is seen by Russia as a military threat. Whether Georgian politicians like it or not, but the reality is that it is impossible to regain Georgia's territorial integrity without interacting with Russia. Secondly, the Georgian authorities must make every possible effort to convince Abkhaz politicians of the complete safety of themselves and the population and the absence of threats from the Georgian troops or paramilitaries. Finally, efforts must be made to overcome the trauma of the atrocities of 1992-1993. In this case, the truth-telling, or truth commissions may be useful. Since today's status quo completely comfortable for the Abkhaz leaders, it is the Georgian side that currently bears most of the responsibility for resolving the conflict. Paradoxical, Russia can become their partner, because is interested in stability on its southern borders and traditionally disapproves of ethnic separatism. However, cooperation with Russia requires from

Georgian politicians to rebuild the ideology of Georgian nationalism, in which the image of a hostile Russia plays the central role of a unifying enemy nowadays. In other words, Georgian politicians face a dilemma between continuing the rhetoric of radical right revanchist nationalism and steps toward reconciliation with Abkhazia. Unfortunately, the first option looks much more likely.

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АБХАЗО-ГРУЗИНСКИЙ ЭТНОПОЛИТИЧЕСКИЙ КОНФЛИКТ КАК КОМПЛЕКСНЫЙ КОНФЛИКТ И ПЕРСПЕКТИВЫ ЕГО РАЗРЕШЕНИЯ

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Статья посвящена проблеме грузино-абхазского этнополитического конфликта. Данный феномен международных отношений рассматривается не как единый процесс, а как сложный случай, состоящий из нескольких по-

следовательных конфликтов или субконфликтов, в ходе которых разные стороны преследовали разные цели и обостряли ситуацию в силу разных причин. Хотя каждый из этих субконфликтов напоминает исторические фазы одного конфликта, тем не менее в статье они рассматриваются как отдельные феномены, каждый из которых имеет свою логику и, следовательно, требует отдельного анализа. Первый субконфликт 1991–1994 гг. можно довольно точно объяснить с точки зрения структурализма как попытку абхазов пересмотреть свой статус и сломать дискриминационные социальные структуры, сложившиеся во время Российской империи и СССР. Второй этап 1994–2008 гг. был периодом националистической мобилизации, а новые столкновения явились результатом намерения грузинской и абхазской элит укрепить свою легитимность и власть. Роль России в этом случае хорошо согласуется с концепцией «гуманитарной интервенции» и не соответствует знаменитой «триадической взаимосвязи» Роджера Брубейкера (1996). Наконец, последнюю фазу конфликта, продолжающуюся с 2008 года, сложно назвать этнополитическим конфликтом, поскольку мир и военный статус-кво были установлены после войны 2008 года, и ни одна из сторон это не может оспорить. Поэтому после 2008 года уместнее говорить о необходимости постконфликтного примирения, а не об абхазо-грузинском этнополитическом конфликте. Однако ни одна из сторон пока не предприняла шагов к этому примирению, потому что урегулирование конфликта невозможно, пока он продолжает использоваться для националистической мобилизации.

Ключевые слова: абхазо-грузинский конфликт, этнополитический конфликт, Абхазия, абхазский национализм, грузинский национализм.

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